Letters and Memoirs of the Prince De Ligne

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PRINCE DE LIGNE

LETTERS, MEMOIRS,
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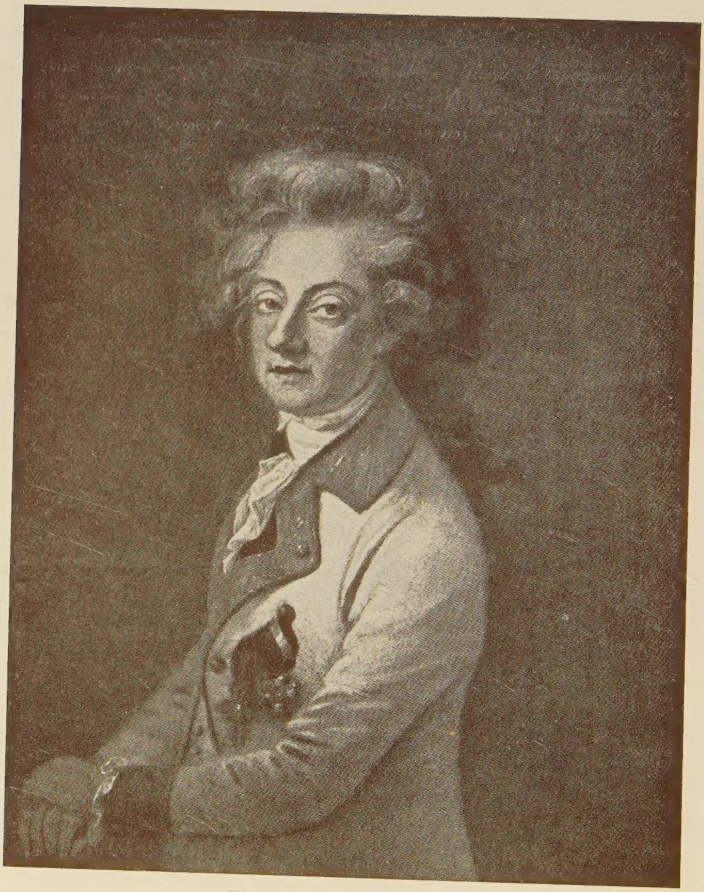

THE PRINCE de LIGNE.

THE BROADWAY LIBRARY
OF XVIII CENTURY FRENCH LITERATURE

LETTERS AND MEMOIRS

OF THE

PRINCE DE LIGNE

WITH SELECTIONS FROM HIS OTHER WORKS

Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Leigh Ashton

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IN THE TRANSLATION OF THIS BOOK

I HAVE BEEN HELPED BY

MY SISTER

HELEN ROSALINE ASHTON,

WHOSE ASSISTANCE I GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE

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Letters and Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne

INTRODUCTION

CHARLES JOSEPH LAMORAL DE LIGNE was baptized on the 23rd of May, 1735, the son of Prince Claude Lamoral de Ligne and Elizabeth Alexandrine Marie, princess of Salm-Salm. His boyhood was solitary, for his father disliked him, and his mother died in 1739; not, as he states in his memoirs, a fortnight after his birth, owing to complications produced by the big-hooped petticoat in which his father compelled her to make her *accouchement*. This picturesque error is typical of that dilettantism which throughout his life gilded the somewhat rococo structure of his conduct. "One's first step in life is to be unlike anyone else" was one of de Ligne's aphorisms—a maxim which led him into errors of taste in his youth, and one which the ripening wisdom of his later years induced him to discard. During this lonely period of his life his temperament found outlet in that passionate study of military history and tactics which was to the end his greatest love. His dying words, "En avance, Marie Thérèse", form a fitting conclusion to the life of a man who, though commemorated by Goethe as the gayest figure of his

age, never revoked his consuming interest in that part of his career to which his real inclinations led him.

At the age of fifteen he was made Chamberlain at the Imperial Court in Vienna, the Court to which his family owed allegiance; at twenty he was married (he says in the *Memoirs* at eighteen)—a marriage of pure arrangement—to Françoise de Lichtenstein, though this contract did not prevent her father from writing to the Prince Archbishop in his demand for a licence, that "Divine Providence has awakened the strongest feelings for each other in the hearts of my daughter and the Prince de Ligne." In much the same way at a later period, Father Coffin wrote to Manning prior to his promotion to the Archbishopric of Westminster, when the matter was very much in the balance, that all was going well, that Monsignor Talbot was saying a Mass every day, and that not a *coup d'état* might be expected, but a *colpo del spirito santo*. Seven children were eventually born to the Prince and his wife, which shows that, despite a career of perpetual travelling and absence, a career marked at every step by affairs and incidents, the Prince did not merely treat his wife as the controller of his household—a post she indeed filled admirably—but was fully recognisant of her other qualities and duties. But then we must also remember that the Prince, in addition to possessing a quality of magnetism, which must have always made life easy for him, was exceedingly personable—tall, bright-eyed, always dressed in the height of fashion, wearing a ring in one ear.

Towards the close of the Seven Years' War, de Ligne,

promoted to a colonelcy, was sent to bear the news of the victory of Maxen to Versailles, where he immediately realized that he had found the world for which he was destined—the world of wit, of flirtation, of luxury; the world of porcelain figures destined to be shattered; the world which he was never to leave, where he could always be, as he says, a man who wishes to be, and is never more than twenty years old. It was in this world that he commenced a career in which he was to gather round him more lovers and friends of note than any other man of historical insignificance who has ever lived. Marie Antoinette, Dubarry, the Marquise de Coigny, Catherine the Great; Maria Theresa, Charles XII, Joseph II, Frederick the Great; Voltaire, Rousseau, Madame de Staël, are a few of the many celebrated persons with whom de Ligne was on terms of intimacy or friendship.

Soon after his first taste of the pleasures of Versailles the war ended. De Ligne took the opportunity of paying a visit to Voltaire at Ferney, where he spent a week, and in the account of his stay gives us a vivid picture of the life and character of that curious genius, which has probably never been bettered. Shortly afterwards his father died and de Ligne became the possessor of the immense family fortunes. He retired to the Château at Belœil, where he commenced to carry out those prospects for his garden which are so delightfully described in the *Coup d'œil sur Belœil.* But he soon emerged to taste once more the delights of Versailles, and to endeavour to negotiate a reconciliation between Maria Theresa and Louis XV, then

sunning his declining years in the smile of Dubarry. At this period, Louis XV's Court was perhaps the most brilliant centre of Europe of the whole century. Boufflers, d'Alembert, Horace Walpole, Madame du Deffand, the Marquise de la Mirepoix, and la Geoffrin were the heads of the group of wits and thinkers; Sophie Arnould and Marie Favart, the actresses, heads of an equally brilliant group of wits and pleasure-seekers; while the Dubarry held a Court of her own. To all these circles de Ligne was admitted, and it is clear that Dubarry fell a victim to his charms and even consented to become his mistress. To his credit it must be said, that when Louis XV died and the Court deserted her, only de Ligne's intervention and protection found her a comfortable asylum.

With the first group he was, at this period, not completely successful. Madame du Deffand writing to Horace Walpole about him says: "I know him and see him sometimes; he is sweet-tempered, with beautiful manners, a nice child, though a little eccentric; I think he would like to be like Boufflers, but he is not nearly witty enough; he is a Gilles to him;" and Grimm in another letter says: "Pretention to wit is a disease we are not fond of in this country." It must be remembered, however, that the old wits would not easily recognize to the full a newcomer, though they might appreciate him, particularly when his wit was of a different kind to their own. For it is clear that de Ligne, though often a pure wit, was also fond of the play upon words which sometimes descends to a much lower level. When late in life he wrote to the

Prince d'Aremberg in 1807 after meeting Talleyrand: "You may imagine his pleasure at meeting me, for there are no Frenchmen left except himself and you and I; and we are not French," he was making a charming witticism, which showed that he had grown out of the fault of which Grimm accused him; but when he said, as he did some years earlier, to a friend who asked how the Bishop of Sens was "that he was out of his diocese (*hors de sens*)," he was merely making a bad pun.

The majority of the next twenty years or so de Ligne passed very happily at Versailles, at Belœil, and at Brussels, at which last place he was able to indulge his taste for theatrical performances. Here, at his own house, he kept his own troupe of actors and had his own theatre, in which Voltaire wished to persuade him, though without success, to produce his plays. The director of the troupe, Jean Nicolas d'Hannetaire, had two beautiful daughters, one of whom, Angélique, though already the mistress of a rich Viscount, who owned a coal-mine, thought it not impolitic and, in addition, no doubt pleasurable, to yield to de Ligne's entreaties. To her he wrote the charming series of twelve letters dedicated to "Eugénie, on Dramatic Representation." These letters are a delightful combination of flattery, advice, and knowledge, and are, perhaps, the best of de Ligne's minor works. He appears to have really loved her, or at least, as much as his calculating mind could allow, and to have regretted ever leaving her. During the course of this affair Jean Jacques Rousseau was banished for his imprudent

utterances. De Ligne wrote and offered him a home at Belœil, which being in Luxemburg was not within French jurisdiction, an act which caused a sensation throughout Europe, as Rousseau rejected the offer in a bad temper and published the letter. Frederick the Great was immensely pleased with de Ligne for his conduct; but his friends in Paris were not so kind, finding the letter falsely emphasized, which indeed it is. Both the letter and the description of his interview with Rousseau on his return from exile seem for a moment to throw de Ligne into the light of a tiresome tuft-hunter. This he was not, but merely genuinely enthusiastic for the great writers of his time, and also assertive of the rights of patronage.

It was with the new Queen, the exquisite Marie Antoinette, that de Ligne experienced his greatest success. Indeed, for this fragile world of artifice, his character was admirably fitted. The Austrian Ambassador wrote to Vienna commenting on the great influence de Ligne had over the Queen, and the conference on the Prince of the 'grand uniform de chasse' was a mark of signal favour which can hardly be paralleled in the case of a foreigner. Marie Antoinette's confidence was not misplaced. No more charming or just description of her personality and conduct is to be found in literature than that we gather from the *Memoirs*. De Ligne championed her on every occasion; her world was for him the perfection of pleasure. He regarded the Revolution as a horrible and unjust punishment of a helpless figure, and at his house in Vienna, though completely reduced in

circumstances, made every effort to give a home to refugees from her adopted country. He indeed confesses in the *Memoirs* to having been in love with her, but it is difficult to believe that, if that had really been the case, he would tell a story which casts the imputation of Lesbianism on her, even though his purpose is to disprove the tale.

In 1779 de Ligne's beloved son Charles, whose relationship with him was so entirely different to that with his own father, was married. The Prince seized the occasion to give one of those fantastic entertainments so much in favour at the time. When the bridal couple rose on the morning after their marriage, they found the park at Belœil full of figures by Lancret. The Prince had dressed up his shepherds and erected booths and side-shows for their entertainment; with them mingled the Ligne Infantry dressed in their rose uniforms singing the praises of the bride. It is interesting to note that on this occasion the bridegroom's suit cost £1,600 odd.

Shortly afterwards the Prince was sent to St Petersburg. There is no doubt that Catherine the Great, who wanted Joseph II for an ally—Maria Theresa was dying—went out of her way to treat de Ligne well, but it is equally certain that they must quickly have established an intimate understanding, for de Ligne's letters to her continued for years after he left Russia, and the wealth of presents he brought back were hardly consistent with the gifts of an envoy, who was not a friend. But it is only natural that someone who was so different from her usual courtiers, a man whose

brilliance had carried him into such high places before, should have been successful also in the case of Catherine. Whether she became his mistress for a time is not possible to say, but he was personable and, as he says in the *Memoirs*, it was the rule at the Russian Court, so that it seems probable.

De Ligne's success on this mission brought him into high favour with Joseph II, with whom he toured the Low Countries on his return. He then resumed his former life passed between Brussels, Belœil, and Versailles. At the latter, a new interest was to seize him—his passion for the rising star Louise-Marthe, Marquise de Coigny. During the next seven years Marie-Antoinette was compelled to share his attentions with this rival, whom she had herself named the Queen of Paris. It is to de Ligne that we owe the portrait of the Marquise, who would otherwise be hardly anything but a name to us. In 1787 he was once more sent to Russia, this time to make the journey with Catherine to the Crimea. It is the height of de Ligne's career. This fantastic voyage is told to us by his pen in the series of letters he wrote to the Marquise. Tinged with the romantic feelings of a distant lover, these letters must have seemed like the description of some Arabian Nights' adventure. The names of the cities, familiar to us now, but strange then, must have sounded in the Marquise's ears like the music of some rare instrument. All de Ligne's most vital powers come out in this series of letters, which both give us the high-water mark of his literary output and an intimate portraiture of the Marquise.

During this mission the first beginnings of the revolution in the Low Countries began to make themselves felt. Shortly afterwards, Joseph II died and de Ligne's career came to an abrupt end. The new Emperor disliked him, and after two years' retirement at Belœil the revolution broke out in earnest, and de Ligne was compelled to retire to Vienna a ruined man in 1794. Here he inhabited a small house and lived as best he could. He still gathered round him the best of the wit in Vienna, most of which was picked from the French refugees, but he was in very straitened circumstances, and, in addition, subjected to the impertinence of police surveillance, for Francis I suspected such a free-thinker of dangerous political ambitions. The Prince found outlet for his frequent feelings of restraint in visits to his son-in-law, the Prince Clary, at Toeplitz, where a more congenial life was possible for him. It was on these visits that he took frequent occasion to meet Casanova, forced at this time to eke out his living as librarian to Count Waldstein. So two great lovers and wits met.

In 1805 he experienced once again the modes of his past life during the period he spent at Dresden and elsewhere in the company of Prince Louis-Ferdinand of Prussia, who, a few weeks before his death on the battlefield of Jena, was indulging his taste for pleasure to the full in the castles of the rich nobles of Bohemia. In 1806 his grand-daughter Sidonie was married from the castle of Toeplitz, and here again for some weeks his former glory descended on him. In 1807 a recognition, though a small one, was bestowed on him by the

Emperor, who made him a Captain of his guard, and in 1808 he was created Field-Marshal. This was the distinction for which he had longed all his life. Even if he could no longer be on the field of battle, it was some consolation to hold one of the highest posts in the army.

During her journey through Germany in 1807 Madame de Staël, who had known him in his Paris days, came to visit him. A Russian, Count Ouvaroff, who was in Vienna at the time, has left a lively account of their meeting. Their different brilliances clashed and sparked against each other, and the duels of wit were long remembered in Vienna, but it is clear that the Prince was not very fond of the distinguished authoress of *Corinne*. He gave a party for her at his hotel, where they performed the *Femmes Savantes*, surely a malicious choice, and another evening at the Countess Zamoiska's, when Madame de Staël's little divertissement *Agar in the Desert* was given, the Prince said in a clear voice to his neighbour: "What is this piece called?" and on being told, said: "Oh! no! I remember the title now; it is the justification of Abraham." Madame de Staël bore him no malice and shortly afterwards published in Paris a selection from his works, which had a great success, due in no small part to her glowing preface. But we know from the recently discovered correspondence between de Ligne and Caroline Murray, his literary agent and mistress, that he did all in his power to prevent Madame de Staël getting access to his works, and we realize that his fears were well grounded, as she had the

insolence to alter and rewrite a considerable part of what she published, because she did not like his style. De Ligne's style is indeed that of written conversation, but its spontaneity and freshness stamps it with an individuality which is lost by prosedification.

In 1809 Vienna was taken by the French and de Ligne had to fly with the Emperor to Buda-Pesth. He disagreed so violently with the Austrian policy that, finding no recognition of his own ideas, he gave them outlet by a series of letters to the Comte Gruenne, one of the aides-de-camp of the Archduke Charles. These letters he was sufficiently foolish as to communicate to Frédéric de Gentz, the ready servant of Metternich. The eventual result was their publication and the complete upset of the Austrian Court. The Emperor was furious with Gruenne, whom he never pardoned and suspended from the army; de Ligne, in consideration of his seventy-four years, received a day's arrest.

During the next three years he met Goethe, whom he had long admired, several times at Toeplitz and elsewhere, and was liked by the great poet, who mentions him with pleasure and admiration in several letters.

In 1811 the Comte de Clary, de Ligne's son-in-law, was sent to Paris as ambassador. In the charming journal, which he has left, it is interesting to find that his popularity was mainly due to his relationship with the Prince. We hear of Napoleon asking solicitously after him, though de Ligne was an avowed enemy of his, and we read with some regret that Clary met Madame de Coigny, whose pure complexion is

mentioned with such pleasure by the Prince, "rouged to the eyes."

The next three years were passed by de Ligne in the mode of life he had set up for himself in Vienna. He delighted in the company of the Comte de Narbonne-Lara, the new French Ambassador, who had been Minister of War under Louis XVI and was an old friend. He still continued his amours, and we read of him breaking off his relations with two Jewesses suddenly, because they lived too high up. "Decidedly," said de Ligne; "you are the last I shall ever make love to on the third floor."

In 1815 the Congress of Vienna met and its members, in their continuous round of pleasure, vied with one another in paying attentions to the Doyen of their company. De Ligne was delighted, but cynical as ever. "The Congress fiddles but there is no performance." Later he thought of them even more bitterly.

"What amusement shall I give them? The funeral of a Field-Marshal?" On the 8th of December he took to his bed, it is said as the result of a chill caught while conducting an amour, and on the 13th at about ten o'clock in the morning he died. He was buried with the fullest military honours, and all the Congress followed him to the grave. It is interesting to note what Francis I's mysterious chief spy, whose identity has never been solved, wrote of the Prince in the secret archives: "The whole world says that the death of the Prince de Ligne will cause a deep sensation throughout Europe. He was famous, respected, and loved everywhere, for at heart he was a

good man. When he momentarily transgressed, it was out of playfulness or for the sake of some whim or witticism. Vienna is decaying as regards society, the arts, the theatre, music, literature, and science. Listen to the public opinion on the death of the late Prince de Ligne, who is compared to Prince Metternich. The Prince de Ligne has been a butterfly, but despite all his peccadilloes he possessed a decided personality, a lovable quality and dignity, which was peculiar to himself."

His position in literature is not of the highest. His chief qualities are vitality and shrewdness, which carry him over the many rough passages he sets himself. For de Ligne puts down his thoughts as they come to him, is a prolific writer, and so many unevennesses and excesses occur on every page. But he is an admirable judge of character, and his vignettes of the rulers and personages with whom he came in contact are of more importance than a hundred more reasoned and deliberate essays. He is very often consumed with the trivial, for as he said: "I should not put such things down if I was going to be read now, but a hundred years from now these apparent trivialities will make pleasant reading." In this he was quite right, and these little details make valuable reading.

Perhaps the most accomplished of his productions, apart from his military writings, which are more for the student than the lay-reader, is his book on gardens, the *Coup d'œil sur Belœil* and its supplement on the gardens of other countries. The Prince was a true amateur of this pleasant art; he studied his authorities

and still indulged his own fancies. He leads us into a world of pretty conceits, which is much like the world he himself lived in. It is a sphere of suggestion and caprice, but behind it all there is the solid knowledge of the expert, but the expert who can afford not to be professional. It is written, as such a book should be, in picturesque and slightly extravagant language appropriate to its rather rococo charm.

There is something worth reading on every page of the Prince de Ligne's works; and something which is always distinguished by the clear individuality of a man whom Madame de Staël so aptly called "un naturel plein de charmes." But his greatest importance for literature and history is that in reading his writings you feel the authentic conversation and spirit of the most brilliant and delicate period that has ever existed, the eighteenth century.

LETTERS

I

To the Comtesse de Cosel[1]

Winter, 1761.

How affecting your counsels are, madame! Forty-eight years of imprisonment in that old castle at Stolpen, where you allowed none but myself to come and worship at your shrine, have not taught you to forget the world and its snares. I have not yet had time to find out whether love, for me, is one of these. I do not think so, I am too fond of my liberty. I cannot say as much for passing affairs: I take them when I can get them, because this is a serious war, and I am afraid of being killed: but they are not sufficiently platonic to be insipid, and only just as piquant as is necessary, without leading to loss of self-respect. When we are not overwhelmed with work, our leisure obliges us to occupy ourselves with conquests that are easy, but not disgraceful.

Drinking has gone out of fashion here, and the opportunities for it are so poor that it is difficult to find out what people are really like. As for gaming, I admit that a great heap of gold on a green cloth at

[1] Anne-Constance de Cosel (1680–1765). Mistress of Frederick Augustus I, Elector of Saxony (1670–1733).

headquarters sometimes gives me the wish to share it with my less fortunate companions, or with my men, and whenever I have this feeling—forgive the superstition—I always win. The other night, I thought about an entertainment that I wanted to give for the sisters at Radmeritz: and I lost.

As regards religion, rather than sully ours by any of the fifty or sixty varieties of heresy, I would give up my christianity for your Judaism which is more venerable; but you cannot get into heaven, as you can into the knightly orders of Malta and Austria, by the number of your heraldic quarterings, and in spite of much folly and neglect of my religious duties I am still very nearly a good son of the church.

As for my love of glory, you must forgive it me, for the sake of the same quality in Joshua, Gideon, David, Abner, a good enough general in his way, and the Maccabees. You have seen heroes, you have created them, and your own personal heroism impressed the hero Charles the Twelfth, when you made an arresting sign to King Augustus, who could hardly believe his eyes, on his making that unexpected appearance at the arsenal, where you were just up and not yet dressed.

You will see that I forget none of the interesting things you tell me, not even the smallest details, which are all just as interesting as the astonishment of the King at the " Salve, Frater " of his Swedish brother, and the fatal glance that you gave him as you went out.

These are examples, madame la Comtesse, of what

happens when those eyes of yours kindle the spark of chivalry, with which, you say, one must not trifle. The four sons of Louis the Fourteenth of Germany, who all adored you, stormed the walls of Prague from four different points at the same time.

On the subject of duels—for nothing escapes your maternal solicitude—I am entirely of your opinion. Luckily everyone is so friendly that I have no need to be otherwise. Once or twice some unguarded or malicious speech might have involved me in an affair of honour: but I have had only one so far, and the other times people laughed at me, excused me, thought it kind of me to show myself ready to fight, and embraced me.

We have given up drinking nowadays, as I told you; we are better brought up; we are more cheerful: and we enjoy life more. Our ancestors, who led a less agreeable one, cheerfully risked the loss of it: they were always in a bad temper, and fought upon the smallest provocation.

Prudence, experience, foresight, madame! Do you know what comes of them sometimes? In the last campaign I flattered myself that I had these three fine qualities: and I missed the chance of capturing two regiments and four pieces of artillery, which would never have escaped me three years ago, when I was not so calculating.

As for philosophy, which you urge upon me with so much reason, I expect misfortunes, I hope to endure them, but, thank heaven, I have had no need of it so far.

I have never been happier, or more free from anxiety, save where my honour and my feelings are concerned: my career is going on very well.

Frederick the Great has undertaken to give me lessons in warfare, for we have had six infernal battles in a very short time, and my winter quarters in Dresden still show me traces of the gallant Saxe.

I believe, madame la Comtesse, that I am destined neither to know sorrow, nor to set any value on all that torments the reasoning animal.

Is not this the way we define man, and lack respect for the brute creation, whose instinct nevertheless is infallible ?

Good and evil repute, and the inconstancy of Fortune and her sex, shall not affect me. I will laugh at the spiteful and pity the envious: but I will not scorn the sufferings of the heart, for the delights of that experience are the reward of the sensitive. You cannot, for example, imagine what were my emotions the other day, when you pronounced your eternal farewell with such fervour, that Friday evening at six, when you left me for the beginning of the mysteries and ceremonies of your sabbath.

Every week, you told me, we assemble, though scattered over the face of the earth, to await that which the prophets have told us to expect. I have been alone in my tower for more than fifty years, but I join with the rest in my prayers. I have learnt their language: I have abjured Luther, whose interpretations and distinctions I do not understand: I should have become a Roman Catholic, had I not preferred to give

up christianity. Here is one of our bibles, with my notes in red pencil: keep it for love of me.

Farewell, be happy, farewell for all your life: mine will end during the course of this year 1761.

The clock struck. Those last words, and those last sounds, are still ringing in my ears. The tears came into my eyes, and were only dried by the awe which came to the rescue of my weakness.

But that dark and gloomy dwelling, hidden so long among the shadows, up a hundred steps in a tower as old as Witikind, lighted less by its feeble lamp than by the whiteness and serenity of your brow and the pallor of your cheeks—sole effect of the ravages of time, which have not been able to disturb the beauty, the straightness and the slenderness of your figure—all these things will only fade from my mind when the memory of your noble attributes, and your goodness towards me, fade from my heart.

II

To Prince Charles de Ligne

Versailles, September 10th, 1779.

Is it not, my dear Charles, an odd business being married? But you will go through with it quite well. One succeeds more or less, according to circumstances. Only fools do not know how to come to terms with the business: and moreover, you have a very pretty little friend who can be your mistress without disgracing you. Although you and I, as father and son, used to call each other Lamoral, without knowing whether that is a Saint's name, I am not sufficiently moral, moralist, or moralizer, to preach to you. I take no notice of those who disbelieve in my morality: for it consists in making everyone around me happy. I am quite sure that yours is similar, and without having an army of maxims, here is one of the four or five which I offer as a finish to your education. As a premise I would say, that for you to be a liar and a coward would make me die of sorrow. I am sure, my boy, that you will understand this short lecture.

Well, we have plenty of affairs to settle just now! Take as much money as you want, and let my men of business do the same: that is one thing settled. The queen says that she will manage my affair at Kœurs;

when I said to her that my affairs of the heart (*de cœur*) were prospering, she told me I was a fool. If Kœurs is settled, that makes two. Your uncle, the bishop of Wilna, who thinks that you and I may one day be Kings of Poland, wants us to become naturalized in that country; we will see about it. Another thing settled.

Our aunt at the Tuileries wants your wife to have the right of being seated in the royal presence, if she should take it into her head to go to Versailles and would like me to give my privilege as a Spanish grandee up to you on that account. I have written to the King of Spain and to the minister on this point and spoken of it to the ambassador. That settles the fourth matter, at the cost of my catching cold by having to get out at the doors of these courtyards, where only the coaches of the grandees of Spain are allowed in, such as the Luxembourg and elsewhere.

I shall have two chances for economy in future, cards and my bed, which will neither of them cost me anything more.

The things which most annoy me are to hear clever people talking nonsense, amateurs talking about war when they have only seen a second-rate parade ground, women talking about disinterestedness when they have secured a pension by dint of pestering the queen who is a thousand times too good, and her ministers and other women talking sentiment when they have had twenty lovers. And then, the plotters! the pompous people! the spiteful people! Sometimes it makes my blood boil: but a little later I cease to think of them.

Would you like just to hear one of my stupidities, which all the royal family recognized as such? You know where my place is at the town theatre, under the king's box, in the stalls, you know the looking-glass in *White Magic*. At the end of the play it became extremely chilly: the king complained of that, and of the frigidity of the actors. I said: "It is because the play turns on a mirror (*glace*: ice)." The two brothers, among others, hooted at this feeble joke. I think the life at Versailles is charming, just like a country house. I send my love to your wife, and to your mother, who had the idea of making a Charles for me like you.

P.S.—By the bye, I am thinking of a wood for my Charles, a fountain which will be called after Hélène, and an arbour for their children. I will set to work upon them as soon as I leave Versailles, to tell you, *tutti quanti*, that I love you with my whole heart.

III

To the King of Poland

During the year 1785.

Your Majesty has commanded me to describe to you one of the greatest men of the age. You admire him, although his proximity has done you some harm: you adopt a historical view, and everything that pertains to this extraordinary genius inspires you with a noble curiosity. I will, therefore, give you an exact account of the very words which I heard from Frederick the Great. Nothing is immaterial in this kind of story, because everything serves to depict character. The man of whom I speak, and he to whom I address myself, will give interest to all that I relate.

I do not like to speak of myself, and I detest the first person even while I employ it myself: still more from other people. If I use it sometimes in this account, it is because I am obliged to speak of myself, in telling you what the King of Prussia said to me. Here is all that I remember; it would perhaps not be worth writing down if it referred to any other person. Certainly no one else would have said these things, and moreover, I repeat that the least words of such a man are worth collecting.

By an extraordinary chance, in 1770, the emperor

was able to give way to the personal admiration which he had conceived for the King of Prussia, and these two great monarchs were on sufficiently good terms to visit each other. The emperor allowed me to be there, and presented me to the king: it was at the camp of Neustadt, in Moravia. I cannot remember whether I really was ill at ease, or only pretended to be; what I do remember is that the emperor observed it, and said to the king, speaking of me: "He is more nervous than I have ever seen him: he will do better presently." He said this with grace and gaiety, and they left headquarters together, to go, I think, to the play. As they went along, the king left the emperor for a moment to ask me whether I had really written the letter to Jean Jacques Rousseau, which had appeared in the papers under my name. I answered: "Sir, I am not sufficiently important to have my name taken in vain." He understood what I meant. Everyone knows that Horace Walpole took the king's name, and wrote Jean Jacques the famous letter which was chiefly responsible for turning the head of that eloquent and unreasonable man of genius.

After the play, the emperor said to the King of Prussia: "Here is Noverre, the famous choreographer: I think he used to be at Berlin." Noverre thereupon made a beautiful dancer's bow. "Oh, I know him," said the king. "We saw him at Berlin—he was very amusing: he could imitate anyone, especially the ballet-girls, till you died of laughing." Noverre, a little annoyed at this way of being remembered, made another fine bow in the third position of dancing, and

hoped that the king himself would give him some small opportunity for revenge. "Your ballets are beautiful," the king said to him; "the dancers are graceful, but artificially so; I think you make them use their arms and shoulders too much; for, if you remember, monsieur Noverre, our première danseuse at Berlin was not like that." "That was why she was at Berlin, your Majesty," answered Noverre.

The king asked me to supper every night, and talked to me almost too much. In spite of my devotion to the emperor, whose general I am glad to be, though neither a d'Argens[1] nor an Algarotti[2] to him, I would not unbend more than was necessary. When I was questioned too much, I would reply and go on with the conversation. The emperor revealed himself freely in his talk, and was perhaps more at ease with the king than the king was with him. One day they talked about what one should wish to be, and asked my opinion. I said that I should like to be a pretty woman up to the age of thirty, then a general both lucky and skilful, until I was sixty: and—as I did not know what to say next, for the sake of adding something, no matter what—a cardinal till I was eighty. The king, who liked to make fun of the sacred college, laughed at this. The emperor did not attempt to defend Rome and its supporters. That was one of the most gay and friendly suppers that I have ever attended.

[1] Jean-Baptiste de Boyer, Marquis d'Argens (1704–1771), philosopher.

[2] Francesco Algarotti (1712–1764), chamberlain to Frederick the Great.

The emperor and the king were without pretensions and without reserve, which was not always the case: and the friendship of these two men, so distinguished, and at times so surprised to find themselves together, was one of the most delightful things you can imagine. The king told me to come and see him whenever he or I should have an hour or two to spare.

An unparalleled storm, a deluge, compared with which that of Deucalion was but a summer shower, flooded the mountains, and our army on manœuvres was nearly drowned. We had a day off next day on this account. I waited upon the king at nine o'clock in the morning, and remained there till one, alone with him, while he talked to me about our generals: I let him express for himself my good opinion of the field-marshals, de Lacy and Laudon, and said to him, with regard to the rest, that it was better to speak of the dead than of the living: that no one can never really judge a general unless he has had some great military opportunity during his lifetime. He spoke to me of Marshal Daun. I said that I thought he would have seemed a great man, if he had fought against the French: but that he had not been able to show his true worth against his Majesty, who appeared, thunderbolt in hand, like Jove, and annihilated his troops. This seemed to please the king: he expressed to me his respect for Marshal Daun, and spoke highly of General Brentano. I asked him his reasons for the praise which I knew he had given to General Beck. He said: "I thought he was a useful man." "I do not think so, your Majesty; he did not do you much harm."

"He captured some of my ammunition." "And let some of your generals escape." "I have never defeated him." "He never came close enough for that; and I always thought that your Majesty pretended not to notice it, in order that he might be given a better command, which would have been to your advantage." "Do you know who taught me the little I know? It was your old Marshal Traun: what a man he was! You were just speaking of the French: do they improve at all?" "They can do anything in time of war, your Majesty: but in peace time they are not expected to be what they are, and are expected to be what they are not." "Do you mean, well disciplined? They were that in the days of Monsieur de Turenne." "Oh, not that: they were out of hand under M. de Vendôme, and they did not lose any more battles: but they are expected to ape you and us, and it does not suit them." "That is how it seems to me; I have said already that their leaders want to sing without knowing any harmony." "Oh, that is quite true: but let us leave them their native wood-notes: let them profit from their courage, their mobility, their very faults: I think that their confusion may infect the enemy." "Certainly, but they need support." "I think from Swiss and German troops, your Majesty." "The French are a brave and attractive nation: it is impossible to dislike them: but, Lord, what have they done with their men of letters! and how much their style differs! Voltaire had an excellent one, for example: d'Alembert, whom I admire for many reasons, makes too much noise, and

is too anxious to make a stir in society: was it the literary men who gave so much lustre to the court of Louis the Fourteenth, or did it come from the many charming people who composed it? He was the best of kings. A little too much good was said of him sometimes while he was alive, but much too much harm after he was dead." "A king of France, your Majesty, is always head of a nation of clever people." "That is the worst possible fate: they are no good to rule. It is better to be head of the Greek church, like my sister, the Empress of Russia. That does her some good, and will do more. There is a religion which takes in many countries and different nations. As for our poor Lutherans, there are so few of them that it is not worth while being their head."

"Well your Majesty, if you were to unite the Calvinists with all the little bastard sects, it would be quite a good position." The king seemed to take fire at this, and his eyes brightened. This did not continue when I said to him: "If the emperor were the head of the Catholic church, that would not be such a bad position either." "Very well, you have cut up Europe into three religious kingdoms," he said, laughing: "I ought not to have started this; see where it leads us; it seems to me that our dreams are not those of an honest man, as the regent used to say: If Louis the Fourteenth were alive, he would thank us!"

All this talk of heads of churches, possible or impossible to realize, gave him for the time being an air of thoughtfulness, almost of vexation.

"Louis the Fourteenth, who had more sense than

cleverness, was always looking more for the one than the other. It was men of genius that he sought and found. You could not say that Corneille, Bossuet, Racine and Condé were merely clever." "There are all sorts, your Majesty, in that country, which really deserves to be a happy one. They declare that your Majesty has said, if one wanted to have a great ambition it should be. . . ." "Yes, that's true, to be King of France." "If Francis the First or Henry the Fourth had come into the world after your Majesty they would have said, to be King of Prussia." "Please tell me, is there really no one left to proscribe in France?" This made me laugh: the king asked me why. I said that he had made me think of the *Russian in Paris*, that charming little poem of M. de Voltaire's, and we reminded each other of charming things in it which made us both laugh. He said to me: "I sometimes hear of the Prince de Conti; what sort of a man is he?" I said: "He is a blend of twenty or thirty men. He is proud, approachable, ambitious and philosophic, by turns: riotous, greedy, lazy, noble, dissipated: the idol and model of good company, only indulging in bad company from caprice, and always with self-respect, generous, eloquent, the most handsome, the most distinguished of men, with a manner and a style all his own, a good friend, honest, amiable, cultivated, an admirer of Montaigne and Rabelais, who sometimes uses their language; with some resemblance to M. de Vendôme and the great Condé; wishing to play a great part, but without sufficient determination for it; anxious to be feared, and only succeeding in being

loved: thinking that he can lead the *Parlement* and be another Duc de Beaufort to the nation, disregarded by the one, and unknown to the other: ready for everything and capable of nothing. What his mother said of him once," I added, "is very true: 'My son has great gifts.' Yes, he has them: one thinks at first that he has great possibilities: but he is like an obelisk, he gets smaller as he goes up, and tapers off to nothing." This portrait seemed to amuse the king. You had to arrest his attention by some rather piquant detail; otherwise he escaped you, or gave you no more chance of talking. An interview with him usually began with the general opening phrases of conversation, but he found means to make them interesting; the sort of thing one often says about rain or fine weather became sublime, and one never heard anything ordinary from him. He ennobled everything: and examples from the Greeks, the Romans, or modern generals cleared up what, with anyone else, would have remained trivial and common. "Did you ever see such rain as we had yesterday? Your good Catholics will say: 'This is what comes of having a man without religion amongst us; what shall we do with this cursed king, who is nothing better than a Lutheran?' For I really think I have brought you bad luck. The soldiers will say: 'We have made peace, and this devil of a man must needs go on upsetting us.'" "Certainly, if your Majesty is the cause of it, it is too bad. Such things are only permitted to Jove, who has good reasons for all that he does: and you would have acted like him, who made

some folk perish by fire, and wished to make others perish by water: however, the fire is over, and I never thought I should survive it." "I apologize for having tormented you so often: I am sorry for all the world, but what a good war for beginners; I have made enough mistakes to teach all you young people to be worth more than I am. Lord, how I admire your grenadiers! how well they marched before me! If the god Mars wished to raise a guard for himself I would advise him to take them without looking further. Did you know that I was very pleased with the emperor, last night at supper? Did you hear what he said to me about the liberty of the press, and forcing people's consciences? There is a great difference between him and his good ancestors." "I am sure that he will have no prejudices about anything, and that your Majesty will be a great source of instruction for him." "He threw disapproval yesterday, very cleverly, without seeming to do so, upon the ridiculous censorship of Vienna, and the unnecessary devotion of his mother, whom he did not name, for certain things, which only lead to hypocrisy. Speaking of that, the empress must dislike you very much." "No, not at all; she scolds me sometimes for my errors, but in a very motherly way: she pities me, and, as she is quite sure I shall reform, she said to me the other day: 'I don't know what you can be doing; you were a great friend of Father Grasset, my confessor; the bishop of Neustadt has always spoken well of you to me; so has the archbishop of Mechlin; and the cardinal is quite fond of you.'"

If only I could remember the numerous illuminating remarks which fell from the king's lips during this conversation, which lasted until the trumpet sounded for the meal! The king sat down to table, and I think it was on this occasion, when someone asked why M. de Laudon had not arrived, that he said: "It is unusual for him, he always used to get there before me. Let him have this place near me, I had rather have him beside me than against me." On another occasion, when the manœuvres had finished early, there was a concert at the emperor's quarters: in spite of the king's taste for music, he condescended to give me the preference, and came to enchant me by the magic of his conversation, and the brilliant, cheerful, and courageous qualities which characterized him. He told me to point out to him the different officers present, and tell him which had served under Marshal Traun; "For," said he, "as I think I told you, he was my instructor and used to correct my exercises." "Your Majesty was very ungrateful, for you did not pay for the lessons; if it were as you say, you ought at least to have let him beat you: and I do not recollect that ever occurring." "I was never defeated, because I would not fight with him." "That is the way the best generals often made war; one need only study the two campaigns of 1674 and 1675, between M. de Montecuccoli and M. de Turenne, on the Rench." "There is no difference between Traun and the first of these; but Lord, what a difference between the second and myself." I showed him the Comte d'Althan, who had been adjutant-general, and the Comte de Pelle-

grini. He asked me twice who and where he was, and said he had such short sight that I must forgive him. "For all that, your Majesty," I said, "when you are at war you can see quite well, and, as far as I remember, quite a long way." "Not with my eyes," said the king, "only with my field-glasses." "Really," said I, "I should like to come across them: but I fear they would suit my eyes as little as the sword of Scanderbeg[1] my arm." I do not know how the conversation changed, but I remember it became so free-thinking that, when someone came to join in, the king warned him to take care, because there was danger in talking to a man condemned to eternal flames by the theologians. I thought he was a little too much impressed by his damnation, and boasted of it too much. Setting on one side the unreliability of these emancipated people, who very often fear the devil with all their hearts, it is at least bad taste to expose oneself in this way: and it was from men of bad taste whom he had about him, such as a certain d'Argens, Maupertuis, La Mettrie, the abbé de Prades, Jordan, and other dull atheists of his academy that he learnt to attack religion, and to talk about dogma, Spinoza, the authority of Rome, etc. I did not always reply when he spoke of them. I seized a moment's pause, whilst he was blowing his nose, to refer to Westphalia, and a little estate that I have there. "I will do what you wish," said the king, "but what is the opinion of my fellow-elector of Cologne?" "I did not know, your Majesty," said I, "that you were an ecclesiastical elector." "I am,

[1] George Kastriota (1403–1468), the Albanian hero.

although I am a Protestant." "That makes no difference to us. The good people think that your Majesty is their protector." He went on asking me the names of all the people he saw: I told him those of a number of young princes who were entering upon a military career, some of whom showed promise. "That may be," said he, "but I think an empire needs a little cross-breeding. I like bastards: look at Marshal Saxe, and my Anhalt, although I am afraid that since he fell on his head he is not so much use as he was. I shall be sorry for both of us if it is so; he is a man of great talent."

I am glad that I recollect this, because I have heard the stupid slanderers who accuse the king of insensibility say that he cared nothing for this accident to the man who seemed his best friend. He would have been lucky if nothing worse had ever been said of him. They said he was jealous of the merits of Schwerin and Keith, and delighted to get them killed. Thus ordinary folk try to lower great men, in order to lessen the distance between them.

The king, out of politeness, had put on white, and so had his staff, in order not to show us the blue uniforms which we had seen so much of on the battlefields: he looked as if he belonged to our army and to the emperor's household. There was, I think, during this visit, on one side or the other, a little feeling, some suspicion, perhaps a commencement of hostility: such as always occurs, says Phillippe de Commines, when sovereigns meet. The king took snuff a great deal: and whilst he cleaned his uniform, as best he

could, he said to me: "I am not tidy enough for you, gentlemen; I do not deserve to wear your colours." The air with which he said this made me think that he would ſtain them with the duſt of war again, if occasion served.

I was forgetting a small chance I had to show the two monarchs off to each other. The king said to me: "I was much pleased to-day by the way the columns were drawn up and deployed." "And so was I, your Majeſty, by the way in which the emperor, who was in command himself, made no miſtake about the ground and the diſtances." He came up at this moment, and asked the king what I had said. "I am sure," replied the king, "that he would not dare to repeat it to your Majeſty; I hardly have the courage to do so myself. We were agreeing about the movements which you ordered this morning for the hussars, who were covering the evolutions of the troops, and saying that your Majeſty had placed them at exactly the right diſtances, so that each time a battalion wheeled it fell perfectly into line." The king soon spoilt this compliment; and the epigram of his invasion of Bohemia, some years later, was more in his own manner. The king was sometimes too ceremonious: this annoyed the emperor. For example, I do not know, if it was to show himself trained as an elector, but when the emperor put his foot in the ſtirrup, the king would take his horse by the bridle, and when the emperor put his leg over the saddle, the king would put his foot in the ſtirrup, and so forth. The emperor showed more real good will, by treating him with great politeness,

as a young prince should behave to an old king, and a young soldier to the best of generals. One day they talked of State policy in an intimate manner. "Everyone cannot have the same policy," said the king: "it depends upon the situation, and circumstances, and the strength of a nation. What suits me would not suit your Majesty; I have sometimes risked a diplomatic lie." "What is that?" said the emperor, laughing. "For example," said the king, cheerfully, "imagining a piece of news which I knew quite well would turn out to be false within twenty-four hours: but no matter, before that happens it has had its effect."

Sometimes there appeared to be cordiality between the two sovereigns. One could see that Frederick the Second liked Joseph the Second; but that the predominance of the empire, and the proximity of Bohemia and Silesia, checked the feeling which the king had for the emperor. Your Majesty will remember their letters on the subject of Bavaria, their compliments, and the way they explained their intentions, the politeness of the explanation, and how, with one piece of politeness after another, the king invaded Bohemia.

IV

To the Marquise de Coigny[1]

Kiew, May, 1787.

Do you know, madame la Marquise, why I miss you? It is because you are not an ordinary woman, and I am not an ordinary man; for I appreciate you better than your own circle. And do you know why you are not an ordinary woman? It is because you are good, though many people do not believe it. It is because you are simple, though you are always finding witty things to say, or rather, have them ready. It is your language. One cannot say that you possess wit, rather you are wit itself. You do not hunt for epigrams, they come to you. Instead of having been like the Maréchale de Luxembourg in your young days, which would have amused you, you will, with more indulgence, be like her in fifty years, like Madame du Deffand, for piquancy, like Madame Geoffrin[2] for logic, like the Maréchale de Mirepoix[3] for taste

[1] Louise-Marthe de Coigny, *née* de Couflans (1759–1832), kept a celebrated salon.

[2] Marie-Thérèse Rodet, Madame Geoffrin (1690–1777), also kept a celebrated salon.

[3] Anne-Gabrielle, Marquise, and later Duchesse, de Mirepoix, a celebrated wit.

After twenty years, you have all the fruits of the three centuries made up by the ages of these ladies. You have the grace of a woman of fashion, without leading her life. You are intellectual, without alarming any but fools. Already people quote as many maxims and wise thoughts of yours as they do epigrams. Never take a lover, it is an abdication that is a most profound yet novel idea. You are more shy than alarming; and when you are so, a certain little rapid murmuring flow of words from your lips betrays it in the most amusing way: as those who are afraid of robbers sing in the street. You are the sweetest of women and the best of good fellows, and in short I miss you more than anything else.

Heavens, what a crowd! what commotion! what a lot of diamonds, gold, orders and ribbons, without counting the Order of the Holy Ghost, what chains and streamers, what turbans and red caps, furred and peaked! These belong to figures who nod their heads like those on your mantelpiece, and have Chinese eyes and noses. They are called Lesghis, and have come as a deputation, with several other subjects from the neighbourhood round the great wall of that empire, and from Persia and Byzantium. It is rather more imposing than a few members of parliament or town councillors, coming twenty miles by coach to Versailles to present a stupid petition.

Louis the Fourteenth must have been jealous of his royal sister, Catherine the Second, or he would have married her, so as to have at any rate a good attendance at court. The sons of the king of Caucasia, Heraclius,

for instance, who are here, would have given him more pleasure than five or six old knights of St Louis, come to wait on the minister, who has dined in Paris: and a score of archbishops, even rather dirty ones, with beards down to their knees, are more picturesque than the small bands of the king's almoner. The escort of Uhlans for a great Polish noble, who is visiting his neighbour, half a mile away, looks better than the bumpkins on horseback who precede the shabby coach and the six old screws of a man in bands and a full-bottomed wig: and the glittering sabres, with jewelled hilts, are more imposing than the white wands of the English king's chamberlains.

The empress received me as if I had been away six days, instead of six years. She reminded me of a thousand things such as only royalty can recollect, for they all have good memories.

There are people here of every sort and kind, high and low diplomacy, high and low intrigues, high and low Poland. Many distinguished people of the country, who cheat themselves, cheat and are cheated by others, all very charming—and their wives even more so—are making sure that the empress does not know how they insulted her when the diet was last in clamour. The women are all trying to catch the eye of Prince Potemkin, which is difficult to do, as the prince squints and is very blind; and some of them want the St Catherine order, so as to wear it with coquetry and infuriate their dear friends and relations.

People want war, and are afraid of it. They complain of the English and Prussian ambassadors, who

are stirring up the Turks; and there is constant friction. I myself, who have nothing to lose, and perhaps some little glory to acquire, wish for it with all my heart; then I say to myself: Dare I wish for that which brings so much misfortune? Then I wish for it no longer: then some trace of restlessness within me brings back the wish, and some trace of reason opposes it. Lord, what fools we mortals be! I am afraid I ought to write to you that—

I dare not hope to go once more to Paris,
I am prepared to go into my grave.

This idea distresses me, because I want to see you again. You mean a great deal more to me than the whole of Paris does. Would you believe that I have just been asked to go to a display of fireworks, which has cost, they say, forty thousand roubles? Your conversational ones are less expensive, and do not leave behind them the gloom and melancholy which always follow the other kind. I prefer your scheme of lighting and decoration.

V

To the Marquise de Coigny

In the Chersonese, 1787.

The fleet of Cleopatra left Kiew, as soon as a general bombardment told us of the disaster on the Beresina. If anyone had seen us embark in our vessels, large and small, to the number of eighty, with an escort of three thousand, and had asked us what the devil we thought we were up to, we should have replied: "Up to anything, as long as it amuses us." There never was a more brilliant or more agreeable voyage. Our rooms were hung with Eastern silks, and furnished with divans: and whenever anyone who, like myself, was in attendance on the empress, boarded or disembarked from his barge, a dozen or so of musicians who were stationed upon it, celebrated his arrival or departure. Coming back at night, after dining on board with the empress, was sometimes a little dangerous, because we had to go back up the Beresina, often against the wind, in a small rowing-boat. To make all complete, we passed through a storm, which wrecked two or three barges on the sandbanks.

Our Cleopatra was not voyaging to allure any Mark Antony, Octavius or Cæsar. Our man had given way already, from admiration, and from hearing

the report of so much genius and power. This Cleopatra does not swallow pearls, but she gives plenty of them. She does not resemble the first one except in her taste for pleasant voyages, ostentation, and learning. She has certainly given more than two hundred thousand volumes to the libraries of the empire. This was the boasted number of the library of Pergamos, with which the queen of Egypt refilled that of Alexandria. As far as entertainments go, the Chersonese is another Alexandria.

After those at Krementczuk, given by Prince Potemkin, who transplanted into a really fairylike English garden, from a great distance, trees as big as himself, we disembarked at the falls of Keydac, the old capital of the Zaporogues, who are river pirates. The emperor Joseph came to meet us.

When we arrived at this place we seemed to be more in fairyland than ever. What greatly astonished and pleased him, for he is a great lover of music, was a harmonized melody where each note was played by a score of musicians, so that you should hear it better, which made a celestial music, too rare to be known on earth.

I forgot to tell you that the king of Poland awaited us at Kanief, on the Beresina. He spent three months and three million roubles there, to see the empress for three hours. I went in a little Zaporoguian canoe to warn him of our arrival. An hour later the great nobles of the empire came to fetch him in a state barge, and as he got into it, he said to them, with the inexpressible charm of his handsome face and pleasant

voice: "Gentlemen, the king of Poland has asked me to recommend Count Poniatowski to you."

Dinner was very cheerful. We drank his health with a triple salute from all the guns of our fleet. On rising from table, the king looked for his hat, and could not find it. The empress, who was quicker, saw where it was, and gave it to him. "You have twice given me something to put on my head," said the king gallantly, alluding to his crown. "Madame, you overwhelm me with benefits and gratitude." Our squadron was drawn up before the king's windows, and afterwards he gave us all supper. All night, as we lay at anchor, a model of Vesuvius lit up the hills, the plain, and the water, more brightly than the sun at midday, gilding and inflaming the landscape. I am afraid of turning into an illumination myself. We see so many, that we are forgetting what night is like.

The empress has never enjoyed the pleasures of society more: and as there are several of us here who do not play cards, she is letting us off the few games we used to have to play with her.

The other day Narishkin, the master of the horse, who is the nicest and most childish of men, began spinning a top, with a head as big as his own, right in the middle of us. After some humming and jumping, which amused us greatly, it split into three or four pieces, with a loud hiss. They flew between her Imperial Majesty and myself, wounded a couple of our neighbours, and hit the head of the invulnerable Prince of Nassau, who has been to be bled twice.

The empress said to us yesterday at dinner: "It is

odd that the plural You should have come into general use. Why has Thou been given up?" "It has not, madame," said I. "It still is used for great folk, since J. B. Rousseau says to God, 'Lord, in Thy glory and worship,' and God is called Thou in all our prayers, as: Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." "Very well, then, gentlemen, why do you treat me with more ceremony than that? Come, I will show you the way. Wilt thou give me some of that?" said she to the master of the horse. "Yes," said he, "if thou wilt give me something else in return." They plunged into a flood of thees and thous at close range, each one more amusing than the last. I mixed mine up with majesties; and thought Thy Majesty was quite enough. The rest did not know what to say, and her Majesty, with her thees and thous, still for all that seemed to remain the autocrat of all the Russias, and of most part of the world.

The empress allowed the Prince of Nassau and myself, as amateurs, and perhaps connoisseurs, to go and reconnoitre Otchakow and ten Turkish vessels, which have been stationed, most unfairly, at the mouth of the Beresina, as if to stop our voyage, should their Imperial Majesties wish to go by water as far as Kinburn. When she saw their position on the little map that had been made for her, Nassau offered his services to get rid of them for her. The empress flicked the paper, smiled, and gave it back to him. I think that was a pretty beginning for the pretty little war which I hope we shall have soon.

I quite thought, the other day, that this was the reason for summoning an officer from the engineers, another from the artillery, and Prince Potemkin, who took them to the cabinet of the empress, where the emperor was already in attendance. "You know," said she, "that your country, France, without knowing why, always protects the Turks." Ségur turned pale, Nassau blushed, Fitzherbert yawned, Coblentz was upset, and I laughed. "Well, not at all! It was only a matter of building an ammunition store in one of the creeks of the famous harbour at Sebastopol."

When I talk to Ségur of my hopes on this subject, he says: "We shall lose the key to the East." And I tell him, "That is bound to happen, after the ministerial blunder you made by your general confession of poverty, at that ridiculous assembly of the *Parlement*."

"What sort of an impression do you think I made on the empress here?" the emperor asked me one day. "A very good omen, your Majesty," said I. "Lord," he added, "how difficult it is to do well among all the rest of you! My dear ambassador, from gratitude, from kindness of heart, from a weakness for her and his friendship for me, often brings incense. You throw in a grain or two, which is a mercy for the rest of us. M. de Ségur has his French compliments. And your Englishman, under cover of an epigram, and as it were unconsciously, discharges from time to time a little piece of flattery which is all the more effective."

Three vessels were launched, and I amused myself by being launched on one of them. I hope you

understand that she was a ship of the line. The gauzes, lace, trimmings, garlands, pearls, and flowers, which adorned the curtains of the pavilions erected on the bank for their Majesties, looked as if they came from the Traits Galants shop in the Rue St Honoré: they were the work of the Russian soldiers, who are turned into dressmakers, sailors, clergy, musicians or surgeons, or what you will, by the touch of a rod, which does not belong to so charming a fairy as you. I am going away to think of your magic in a land of magicians. We are just starting for Tauris, where, if Iphigenia had been as delightful as you are, she would never have been sacrificed, or at any rate, not in the same way.

VI

To the Marquise de Coigny

Partenizza.

I write to you from the silver strand of the Black Sea; from the shore of a great stream into which descend all the torrents of Tczetterdan, in the shade of two of the largest walnut trees there are, as old as time itself; from the foot of a rock on which there is still to be seen a column, the sad relic of Diana's temple, so famous for the sacrifice of Iphigenia; from beside the rock whence Thoas precipitated strangers; in short, from the most interesting and beautiful place in the world.

My Turkish rug is stretched upon tiles, and I am surrounded by the Tartars who are entertaining me, who watch me as I write, and cast up their eyes in admiration as if I were another Mahomet.

I have discovered the fortunate shores of the ancient Idalia, and the coast of Anatolia. Fig-trees, palms, olives, cherry-trees, apricots, and peach-trees in full flower, diffuse sweet perfume and shelter me from the rays of the sun. The waves of the sea roll diamond pebbles at my feet. I see behind me, through the foliage, a semicircle of buildings, where these savage tribesmen are smoking on the flat roofs which serve

them for living-rooms. I see their graveyard, which, owing to its Mahometan choice of site, reminds me of the Champs-Elysées. It lies on the banks of the stream, of which I spoke, but at the point where the pebbles most nearly choke its course it becomes wider in the middle and flows quietly between fruit-bearing trees, which afford their hospitable shade to the dead. Their quiet resting-places are marked by stones headed with turbans, of which some are gilt, or by a kind of funeral urn in marble, but indifferently executed.

This variety of every kind of spectacle, which affords food for thought, makes my pen fall from my hand. I stretch myself upon my tiled floor, and I meditate.

You cannot think how much is passing through my mind. I feel like a new being. I can possess my spirit in peace at last, after escaping from the pomp and confusion of festivities, from the fatigue of amusements, and from their Imperial Majesties of the West and the North, whom I have left on the other side of these mountains, whose chain stretches away almost to the peak famous for the torment of Prometheus. I ask myself where I am, and what fate has brought me hither. This has given me the opportunity of withdrawing into myself, and, without suspecting it, I am trying to reconcile the inconsistencies of my life.

I begin to perceive that, although I can only be happy in tranquillity and independence, which are both within my power, and am inclined to laziness, both of body and mind, yet I disturb the one unceasingly by wars, the holding of reviews, and travel, and lavish the other on people who often are not worth it. I can amuse

myself well enough, but I am obliged to weary myself by amusing those who cannot amuse themselves. If I am preoccupied for a moment by the thousand things that are passing through my head, they say to me: "You are melancholy." It is enough to make one so. Or else, "You are bored." If I were, this would be enough to make me boring also.

I ask myself why, when I have no taste either for ceremony, honours, money, or favour, and am in a position to do without all of them, I have spent my life at court, in every European country.

I remember that the almost fatherly kindness of the emperor Francis the First, who liked hare-brained young men, first attached me to him: afterwards I was loved by one of his mistresses, and that kept me for a long time at his court because after I had lost, as always happens in these cases, the favour of the charming creature, that of my sovereign remained with me still. At his death, I still considered myself, young as I was, a noble of the old court, and was ready to criticize the new one without knowing it, until I found that the new emperor could also be charming and had those qualities which made one wish for his esteem rather than his indulgence. As I was sure that he did not wish to single out one man above another, I felt free to indulge my attachment to his person, and while regretting the too great rapidity of his military operations, I admired most part of them, and shall always praise the good intentions of a genius as active as it was fertile.

I had been sent to the French court at its most

brilliant time and on a most brilliant occasion, with the news of a victory. I never came back and thought I had escaped from my chains, although they were of flowers. But Fate brought M. d'Artois to a neighbouring fort when I was inspecting troops. I waited upon him with a small number of my smart Austrian officers. He received us, called me up, and began to talk, first like the king's brother, then as if he were mine. We drank, gambled, and joked together: he had his freedom for the first time, and hardly knew what to do with it. I am always captivated by this first rush of youth's charming petulance and gaiety. The frankness and charm of his nature, which appeared in everything that he did, took me completely. He wished me to visit him at Versailles. I said that I should see him in Paris, when he came there. He insisted, and spoke of the matter to the queen, who told me to go. The attractions of his person and mind, which was beautiful and innocent, and those of the society about him, led me to pass five months with him every year, during which time I was always with him. I went first for the sake of amusement, since Versailles at that time was a garden of delight: I returned from gratitude.

Prince Henry was making a tour of the battlefields. We were drawn together by our taste for philosophy and for military education: I went with him: I had the luck to please him. He was gracious to me, and I was attentive to him: we wrote to each other regularly, and met at Spa and Rheinsberg.

A camp of the emperor's in Moravia attracted the

former and present kings of Prussia. The former perceived my adoration of great men, and lured me to Berlin. My relations with him, and the marks of esteem and kindness which I had from this greatest of heroes, covered me with glory. His nephew, the former Crown Prince, was going to St Petersburg. We had become intimate over certain matters of love, confidence, money, and friendship, with regard to one of his mistresses: and in a strange country, in spite of their difference of interests, careers, and rank, acquaintances become friends. The result was favouritism on his part and embarrassment on mine, when I had to get rid of him in Russia.

I was delivered from the affections of the two other northern kings. The feeble intelligence of the one, which soon afterwards became totally deranged, and the good sense of the other, saved me from the endless favours which had been promised me when I should make the journey to Stockholm and Copenhagen. I was quit of them both after I had given an entertainment for the one, and the other had given one for me.

My son Charles married a pretty Polish girl. Her family gave us bills instead of actual money. They were claims in the court of Russia. I made myself a Pole, or was made one, in the course of these proceedings. A fool of a bishop, who has since been hung, the uncle of my daughter-in-law, persuaded himself that I had great influence with the empress of Russia, because he heard that she had treated me well—and thought that I should be made king of Poland if I were naturalized. What a change in the state of

affairs in Europe! What joy for the families of Ligne and Massalski! I laughed at him, but I conceived a wish to please the nation, which was then assembled for the diet. I talked Latin, and embraced and kissed many gentlemen with moustaches. I intrigued for the king of Poland, who is himself an intriguer, as all kings must be who only hold their position as long as they do the will of their neighbours and subjects. He was good, kind and attractive: I gave him advice; and became involved in his affairs.

I went to Russia. The first thing I did was to forget the object of my journey, because it seemed to me unchivalrous to employ the numerous favours which were shown me every day as a means for obtaining others. The confiding and alluring simplicity of Catherine the Great bewitched me, and it is her witchcraft that has led me to this witching place.

I let my gaze wander over it: I calm my mind, which told me that I had no such excuse, by the recapitulation of this train of circumstances which has always made me do what I did not wish to do: and I let my imagination run free.

To-night Thetis will have no need to rock the sun to sleep: his couch is tranquil: he can descend from his chariot when he will, and sink into her arms. The night will be delicious. The ocean, wearied by the slight movement it has kept up during the day, is so calm, that it is like a great mirror, in which I can see down to the bottom of my heart. I have never known a more beautiful evening, and my thoughts are as clear as the water and the sky. Why, say I to myself,

do I not, instead of occupying myself with a meditation upon the beauties of nature, enjoy them in the sweet repose which I adore? It is because I think that this place will inspire me, and that to my other follies is added a trace of literary vanity. I shall be nothing more? Well, I shall be read: it is a way of not ceasing to be. And we only get ourselves killed, moreover, for the sake of posterity, which will not be in the least grateful.

But this is perhaps the place from which Ovid wrote: he may have sat where I am sitting. The elegies were written in Pontus: here is the Black Sea: this country belonged to Mithridates, king of Pontus; and as the place of his exile is quite uncertain, I have all the more right to believe that it was here than at Karansebes, as the Transylvanians assert. Their title to this assumption is his *Cara mea sedes*, the corrupt pronunciation of which they think has produced the name I have just mentioned. Yes, it was at Partenizza, of which the Tartar accent has changed the Greek name, which was Parthenion, and meant the virgin, it was at this famous cape, Parthenion, that so many events took place. It was here that mythology exalted the imagination. All the talent which was at the service of the pagan gods, and never passed to Him of Israel, whose temples are always in such bad taste, here held their sway. Shall I leave fable for history a moment? I have discovered Eupatoria, which was founded by Mithridates. I have collected, quite close by, in old Chersonese, the remains of alabaster columns. I have found fragments of aqueducts and

walls, which show me a ground-plan larger than both London and Paris. I say to myself—Those two cities will pass away, as this has done: it had the same intrigues of love and diplomacy: each man thought he was making a great stir in the world: and even the very name of the country, distorted by the Tartar and the Crimean, has fallen into oblivion. A fine reflection for important people.

When I turn round, I approve the laziness of my good Mahometans, seated with hands and feet crossed, on the roofs, whence they can survey so many regions of folly. I have found among them an Albanian, who knows a little Italian. I told him to ask them if they were happy, whether I could do anything for them, and if they knew that the empress had given them to me. They gave me to understand that they knew, in general terms, that they had so been allotted, but were not quite sure what it meant: that they were happy for the time being; that if they ceased to be so they would embark on the two vessels which they have built, and which I can see from where I am, and would take refuge with the Turks in Roumania. I told them that I liked lazy people, but wished to know how they were managing to live. They pointed out a few sheep, stretched, like myself, upon the grass. I blessed their laziness. They showed me their fruit-trees and made me understand that, when the time for plucking them arrives, the kaimakan of the district comes from Barczisarai to share them; that each family gets two hundred francs a year by the sale; and that there are forty-six of them, at Partenizza and at Nikita, another

small estate which belongs to me, whose Greek name signifies victory. I blessed their laziness. I promised that no one should disturb them. They brought me butter, cheese, and milk, which was not from mares, as they say it is with the Tartars. I blessed their laziness: and fell again into thought.

Once again, what am I doing here? Am I a prisoner of the Turks? Am I cast here by shipwreck? Am I, like Ovid, in exile? Am I driven here by some court, or by my own passions? I reflect, and say to myself, "Not at all. There might be several reasons for it." After my children, and two or three women whom I love, or think I love, madly, my gardens are what give me most pleasure in life; there are few as beautiful: I amuse myself by working to make them better still; I am hardly ever there. I have never been there in the time when they are in flower, when a small forest of rare shrubs perfumes the air and scents the distance. I am two thousand miles away from it all. I am the owner of estates beside the Atlantic, and I find myself on my estates beside the Black Sea. A letter from the empress has come eight hundred miles to me, she remembers our conversations about the golden age of antiquity; she proposes to follow me to these lovely lands, to which she has restored the name of Tauris, and because of my taste for all that has to do with Iphigenia, she has given me the place of her sacrifice.

I tried at first to forget all the princes of the world, its thrones and dominations, and to withdraw into myself. Suddenly I experienced one of those delightful blanks which I enjoy so much, when the spirit

reposes itself altogether, and one hardly knows that one exists. What is the soul doing at these times? I do not know, but I am sure that its functions are suspended.

Afterwards I made plans. I am weary of almost everything I know, why not settle here? I would convert these Tartars on the question of the juice of the grape, and in order to give myself the appearance of a palace, which would be seen by sailors from far away, I would build above their huts eight houses for vine-dressers, with columns to join them together, and a balustrade which would hide the roof. I am describing that which I should have done immediately, had it not been for the war that arose out of our festal voyage.

How sad, I used to say, that the superstition of the Greek church should have destroyed those beautiful relics of pagan worship, which were so stimulating to the imagination! My Albanian cuts me short at once by showing me the place where a bishop had been assassinated, and the site of a monastery, which luckily is there no more. The commercial spirit of the Genoese completed the downfall of these beautiful places, which at any rate do nowadays rejoice the eye by their white minarets, their tall and slender towers, which look like shafts, and that Oriental type of architecture, which lends its charm to the meanest cabin.

My reflections, which led me to the ravages of time, then return to those which my heart has sustained. I believe that in this world nothing remains perfectly stationary, and that as soon as an empire or power ceased to enlarge, it diminishes, just as, on the day

when one ceases to love more, one begins to love less. My heart! What have I said? Is it the spectacle of my heart, or that of nature, which transports me? I dissolve in tears: I know not why: but how sweet they are! I feel a general tenderness, an outburst of emotion, directed I know not whither. At this moment of confusion in my thoughts, I weep without being unhappy. But alas, I say, addressing myself to certain persons who are often in my thoughts, perhaps I am unhappy: are you the same, now that we are separated by oceans, by deserts, by remorse, by family influence, by quarrels and by prejudice? Or do I weep for you who loved me, without telling me so, and whom I left for lack of understanding? Is it for you, superstitious victims of so many duties? The love of poetry and nature, of the books we read and the walks we took together, and other bonds, united us before we guessed it. Is it for those of you whom a little too much confidence, ardour, and daring betrayed against your will? Is it for you whom chance and inexperience flung into my arms, whose memory will always be dear to me, as the first-fruits of a feeling and innocent heart? Is it for you who shared with me a pretty folly? Is it for you who were led astray by some winter of festivity, some entertainment, some wood, some garden, some journey, some innocent dissipation which brought about the loss of innocence? Let us rather say; it was through parting that we did ill: when we were together we did well.

My tears cannot be dried. Is it from the presentiment of some loss, for ever agonizing, that I must

undergo, of some part of myself that must one day be torn from me? I banish this frightful thought: I say to myself, with a prayer:—This vague melancholy, which is produced in early youth by the desire to love, perhaps announces the approach of some celestial being, worthy of all my devotion, who will adorn and close my career in the kingdom of love. It seemed to me that the future was about to unveil itself before me. There is but one step from the exaltation in which I found myself to a divine rapture, and from that to divination and the interpretation of oracles.

I then recalled all that had preceded and followed those less significant, yet passably happy and unhappy moments, whose miseries themselves had such power to charm. I remembered how, weary of passing my nights in the snow, waiting for the moment when I might outwit a mother or a husband, at the risk of a storm of blows, or of being taken for a thief (which did happen to me once), I cursed myself for leaving those conquests which are easy to make and simple to keep. I had loved at the Comédie Française, because I said to myself that it was the school of theatrical taste, and required the best of talent. But how different, I soon added, it was from the Italian Comedy! A sweet voice goes straight to the heart: you have your share in the applause that comes from the public for an arietta. And no sooner was I happy there, than a dancer at the Opera became for me the perfection of voluptuous pleasure. All these movements, said I, lead to the one thing: this arm, as she lifts it, this toe as she points it, are the signals of

enjoyment. And soon afterwards, annoyed at finding no annoyances, I returned to society, to seek the charming distresses of which I had complained a short time before.

Thus one thing succeeded another in my memory, and occupied my thoughts: thus the picture of my loves, past, present and future, was painted in my recollections.

Oh, that I could make in the same way a sketch of my friendships! But oh, my friends, true friendship is no more, as the poet said. That precious goddess is only found in porcelain, for dessert plates and the adornment of chimney-pieces. Sacrifices are made in marble, in china, and more often in painting, to the name of friendship: but when are they made in reality? I have more friends than most: and having no pretensions of any kind, having neither great feats nor alarming merit, I am always meeting those casual acquaintances with whom one dines and dices every night. But have I found anyone who has taken enough trouble about me to deserve my gratitude? I am longing to owe it to someone. Others have owed it to me, and although they have seldom displayed it, I still, from time to time, like to lay a man under some little obligation to me. The fear of being myself ungrateful often makes me err in the opposite direction: and a little hypocrisy in this respect seems to me pardonable.

Without weeping over humanity, without either loving or hating mankind to excess, since hate is exhausting, I am no more satisfied with them than I am

with myself, after tracing these errors and follies of mine. All this leads me to the other features in my character. In examining myself, I only find one good quality, which is that I envy no one else's good luck.

I think of the world as a puppet-show, and await the moment when Time, lifting his sharp scythe, will clear it away. The nine or ten campaigns that I have made, the dozen or so battles and skirmishes that I have seen, now come back to me as if they were a dream. I reflect upon the vanity of fame, which the world ignores, forgets, envies, attacks, or revokes in doubt; and yet, say I to myself, the greater part of my life has been spent in seeking to lose it, by running after fame. I do not dispute my own courage; it may be brilliant enough, but I do not think it is sufficiently pure; there is charlatanry in it. I prefer the courage of my dear Charles, who never looks to see if you are looking at him.

I examine myself further. I find in myself a score of faults. Then I reflect upon the vanity of ambition. Death has taken and will take from me the favour of many great soldiers and many great sovereigns. Caprice, inconstancy and bad luck will frustrate my hopes of replacing the former, and serving the successors of the latter. Intrigue, banishing me far away, may make me forget the soldiers who would still hear the voice of their leader with pleasure. Without regret for the past, or anxiety for the future, I leave the present to the course of destiny.

After I had laughed at my lack of merit and my adventures in the court and the field, I remember that

I congratulated myself on not being worse than I am, and on the great gift of finding happiness in everything. A child of nature, perhaps a spoilt child, I saw myself in the end, as I had felt obliged to depict myself, in that great sea, which was to my spirit, as I have said, what a mirror is to a face.

Already the shades of night were beginning to darken. The horizon waited for the sun. The sheep, who were feeding round my Turkish carpet, bleated for the Tartars, who descended gravely from the roofs, and penned them with the ewes, who had been shut up all the day. The muezzins called to prayer from the height of the minarets. I sought with my left hand the beard which I do not possess: I laid my right hand on my bosom; and I blessed all lazy folk. Then I took leave of them. They were as astonished to have me for a master as to find that I wished them to be their own masters still.

I gathered together my thoughts, which had been scattered by this magic lantern view of my whole life. I looked round me with affection at the lovely place, which had given me the happiest day of my life, and which I should never see again. A few last tears fell from my eyes. A fresh wind sprang up, and made me dislike the thought of going to Theodosia by sea. I mounted a Tartar horse, and plunged again into a horror of night, bad roads, and torrents, to cross the famous mountains, and rejoin their Majesties in forty-eight hours at Karassbazar.

Partenizza, enchanted spot, which recalled me to myself.
Partenizza, you will never fade from my memory.

VII

To Prince Charles de Ligne

From the headquarters of Marshal de Romanzow, Poland, June 8th, 1788.

My Dear Charles,

If you were to ask me how I was getting on, I should say '*About the same.*' I run about after armies and generals to make them do something. The devil has a finger in the pie, in spite of all their Russian signs of the cross.

The best thing I have done was to leave that man who trifled, and paid compliments, and said he was my admirer, and come to Kaminiecz. Oh, if I had a heart left, how deep in love I should be! The governor's wife, that superb Greek woman, whom everyone knows and admires, drove me in her carriage to within range of the guns of Choczim, which fired several shots over our heads.

I admit that I should have preferred to reconnoitre her weak points rather than those of the fortress.

I am lodging with her: but what a pandemonium it is! There was a noise of chains all night long: and I thought it was ghosts. The truth was that her husband, the commandant of Kaminiecz, is only served by men condemned to hard labour. What a contrast between their villainous faces and the beauty which

they serve under the lash! Even the cook is a convict. It is economical, but alarming.

I hope, my dear Charles, that Otchakow (for I am going back to Potemkin, since I can make still less of this man here) will bring me a little renown of the kind you admire. I shall get killed on your account, for I wish you to have a father who is worthy of you. You have been thinking of me, you say: that is noble and affecting. You have worked for me, and I will work for you. I send you a tender greeting, five or six hundred miles.

VIII

To the Emperor Joseph II

In camp at Otchakoff, July, 1788.

The prince said to me one day, "This damned place is giving me a great deal of trouble." I said to him, "You will have trouble with it for a long time, if you do not set about things more vigorously. Make a feigned attack on one side, and then throw your men into the trenches on the other: rush in pell mell with the garrison of the old fortress, and you will have the place." "Do you suppose," he replied, "that this is like your Sabacz, which was defended by a thousand men, and captured by twenty thousand?"

I answered that he ought not to refer to Sabacz unless he spoke of it with respect and would imitate an attack made with so much vigour by two regiments and his Imperial Majesty himself, who remained under a hot fire to judge the moment when the assault should be made. Next morning, when the prince went to visit a battery of six guns which he had placed himself in the open field, about a hundred and fifty yards from the trenches, he remembered our conversation of the previous day; and when the bullets rained about us, and killed an artillery driver and his

team beside him, he said with a laugh, to the Comte de Branicki, "Ask the Prince de Ligne whether his emperor was as brave at Sabacz as I am here." Certainly the feigned attack was a sharp one, and no one could have been more honourably or more cheerfully courageous than the prince. I was charmed with him upon that occasion, as upon two or three others, when he exposed himself to the greatest danger: and I told him that I saw it put him into a good temper to be under fire.

As I thought it would be necessary to take steps to capture the place, either by means of an attack in force, or of a regular siege, which would have been a matter of a week, I made a point of being at some of the skirmishes, because I had never seen any of the Turkish mercenaries. Our Circassians killed several of them with arrows; this was quite amusing. We often heard the crack of muskets from the gardens where the janissaries were concealed, and much firing of pistols by the troops we called the bravi. We took and lost the pasha's gardens several times. The prince led us there one day and we came in for the stray bullets passing over the heads of the attacking force, commanded by Pahlen. My horse fell once, either from fear or from the wind of a shot.

I can see that this kind of siege is more dangerous than honourable to those who take their walks abroad, and I do not walk upright more than is necessary, when I remember it: for no sooner do we leave the lines than we are surprised by a storm of bullets like rain: we are nearly as much besieged as besiegers.

I made this observation in vain to Comte Roger de Damas: he sustained a contusion of the chest from a ball yesterday, before he had well recovered from his previous wound. I hope soon to have more interesting news for your Imperial Majesty, but I begin to doubt about it.

IX

To the Empress Catherine II

Vienna, February 23rd, 1790.

He is no more, madame: he is no more, the prince who was an honour to the name of man, the man who was an honour to the name of prince. That ardent soul is extinguished, like a lamp whose oil is consumed, and that active body is between four boards, which prevent all movement. After bearing his precious remains I was one of the four who accompanied them to the monastery of the Capuchins. Yesterday I was not in a state to give your Imperial Majesty an account of it. Joseph the Second died with fortitude, as he had lived; he began and ended in the same methodical way. He gave his own orders for the escort which accompanied the Holy Sacrament to his deathbed. He raised himself up to see if all was as he had commanded. When the worst blow fell upon him, when fate put the finishing stroke to his misfortunes, he asked: "Where will the body of the Princess be laid in state?" They told him: "In the Chapel." "No," said Joseph the Second, "that will be my place: and they would have to disturb her for me: lay her in some other place, where she can be left in peace."

These details give me strength: I did not think I

could continue such a ſtory. He chose and arranged the hours at which prayers were to be read to him. He read himself as many as he could, and in fulfilling his religious duties he seemed to be ſetting his ſoul in order, as he had wiſhed to ſet in order everything in his kingdom. He raiſed to the rank of baron the doctor who told him the worſt: he loved him ſo much that he aſked him to accompany his obſequies to the tomb: he aſked to be told the day, almoſt the hour, when he muſt deſcend thither, and the phyſician propheſied them only too well. The emperor ſaid to me, when I arrived from the Hungarian army, which I had led into Silesia, a few days before his death: "I was in no fit ſtate to ſee you yeſterday. Your country has killed me: the capture of Ghent was my laſt agony, and the abandonment of Bruſſels my death. How badly they have treated me! (He repeated this several times.) I am dying of it: only a heart of ſtone could ſurvive it. I thank you," he added, "for all that you have done for me. Laudon ſpoke well of you to me: I thank you for your fidelity. Go to the Low Countries: make them return to their allegiance, and if you cannot do ſo remain there: do not ſacrifice your intereſts to me, you have your children to conſider."

All theſe words touched me ſo profoundly, and are ſo graven in my memory, that Your Imperial Majeſty can be ſure they are exactly his. My actions ſhall ſpeak for me: it is unneceſſary to report my own words, which were choked with tears. The emperor aſked madame de Chanclos, who came in juſt afterwards: "Did anyone weep when I received the ſacrament?"

"Yes," said she, "I noticed the Prince de Ligne, for example, all in tears." "I did not know I was worth as much as that," said the emperor, almost with gaiety.

For the rest, madame, to the shame of humanity shall I speak it? I have seen four great sovereigns expire: people only regret them for a year after their death: the first six months are spent in hope, and the other six in criticism. Thus it was when Maria-Theresa died. We hardly feel the loss we have sustained. The curious, the indifferent, the ungrateful, the intriguing, occupy themselves with the new ruler. Within a year the soldier will say: "Joseph the Second heard the guns on the embankment at Beschania, and musketry in the suburbs of Sabacz: and used to give medals for bravery in the field." The traveller will say: "What fine buildings he put up for schools, for hospitals, for prisons, for colleges." The manufacturer will say: "He encouraged us;" the labourer: "He was a hard worker himself;" the heretic: "He was our defender;" the presidents of departments, the heads of public offices, will say: "He was our head clerk and our chief at one and the same time;" the ambassadors: "He killed himself for the State, of which he called himself the first subject;" the sick will say: "He visited us without ceasing;" the townsman: "He adorned our cities with parks and promenades;" the peasant and the servant will say: "We could address him when we pleased;" the heads of households: "He gave us counsel;" his own Court will say: "He was reliable and kind; he told stories

well and was a good talker; one could speak freely to him on any subject."

You see, madame, that I am speaking to you of the life of the emperor, when I only intended to tell you of his death. Your Imperial Majesty said to me, ten years ago, as we were driving to Tsarskoe-Selo: "Your ruler has a mind which is always bent towards what is useful: there is nothing frivolous in his ideas: he is like Peter the Great, he lets people contradict him: he is not offended by resistance to his opinion, and would rather convince than command."

X

To Prince Charles de Ligne

Vienna, 1790.

Thank God, thank God, thank God, dear Charles! You are coming back to me, you yourself! I can hardly believe it. I swear to you that, with the luck you have had in escaping all these dangers, you must be immortal in body as well as in spirit. I don't know how I shall manage to kiss you, what I shall do, where your big nose will go, and where I shall put mine. But I do intend to kiss your wounded knee, falling on my own knees, perhaps before you, perhaps before Heaven.

XI

To Princess Hélène de Ligne

Vienna, January 15th, 1791.

As we do not know whether Princess Charles de Ligne is still in existence, and as apparently she is dead to us, and to her little Sidonie, we cannot make any arrangements with her.

A woman who has been smoked out of her home by a drunken Polish tyrant cannot prevent the great-uncle of Sidonie from paying those bills of exchange for which he has given us all possible security, and which will result, according to the opinion of Prince Charles, of the Prince Bishop, and even of his mother, in the redemption of the mortgage on the Galician estates. She cannot, and should not, administer them herself, because she is in the power of a man who has the public conduct of her affairs: she might do injury to her daughter.

If she should shake off the yoke under which she is living, and remove to Paris, or Warsaw, or some one of my estates, she would receive an allowance of thirty thousand French livres, which her husband intends to fix as the minimum, when he himself is in possession of the whole of his revenues.

As the Princess Charles would be even more un-

happy than she is, if she were to marry Prince Potocki, her husband, from regard to the interests of herself and her daughter, will never consent to this.

LIGNE.

P.S.—The princess must have back at once her diamonds and all that belongs to her, and must return to Pradel the drawings of her husband which I think she still possesses.

XII

To Princess Christine de Clary

Edelstetten, May 12th, 1803.

Well, the day passed off extremely well. After a little too much ceremony over the parading of my beautiful blue soldiers (with facings and collars of rose-pink to match my livery) and a good deal more of it at dinner, I made my escape, and went out for a walk by myself to see if there was anything to be done to improve the neighbourhood.

I went into most of the houses, to see if the people were fairly happy, or could be made more so. I received many requests and granted all that I could at once.

The noble ladies at the convent were much amused, on my return, by my astonishment at the little principality which I had taken away from them, and I congratulated myself on not having acted like many amongst us, who by careful intriguing have obtained three times as much on the right bank of the Rhine as they had lost on the left bank.

Charles the Twelfth, in speaking of his kingdom, said: "God has given it to me, and the devil himself shall not take it away from me." I do not know who gave me mine, but I have grave fears that God will

take it away from me, and that would distress me, for I like being here. . . . You would have laughed till you cried at my inauguration: I sat on a princely throne, as in a comic opera, and there were a great many floral decorations, but the carpet was torn. Some old pieces of crimson velvet, worn threadbare, hung above me, covering a daïs and ready to fall on my head.

My faithful subjects came and kissed my hand: as they were not numerous, this did not fatigue me excessively, and with the charlatanry of a philosophic ruler, I supported the old men from falling on the steps as they descended, for, when you are an emperor, you must appear to be the friend of man. For the rest, my Catholics are so God-fearing and such good folk that, in order not to hurt their feelings, I sent away the Anabaptists, with whom I wished to come to terms, and who would have provided me with twice the fifteen thousand florins brought me by the others. . . .

One of the noble ladies at the convent, Mademoiselle de Bœsler, who is pretty and kind, is afraid of grasshoppers: these charming ladies and myself collected about a hundred, put them in a box, and sent them to her as if from her family. Hardly had we left her room to go to bed ourselves (as we said) when she opened it, and was in agonies. Her shrieks, our laughter, and then our pity, our fears that she would burst into tears, our regrets for a pleasantry that was perhaps too serious, were but the affair of a moment. I went back into her room; like Hercules I destroyed the monsters that threatened her charms, and I and my companions obtained her pardon on our knees.

This smells of the convent or the college, it is a little childish for an aged ruler: but respect his morals, when such are his amusements. There may be others more lively, but none more pure.

They seem to like me: I am delighted with all the world, and can finish my letter by telling you, dear Christine, that I should be the happiest man in the world if you were here, for without you can there be perfect happiness for me ?

XIII

To Countess Hélène Potocka-Ligne

Vienna, May 1st, 1807.

Your letter, my dear daughter-in-law (for this seems to me, like the priesthood, an inalienable title), filled us all with affection and remembrance. Sidonie is in the seventh heaven over it: and Christine saw in it so much delicacy and kindness in the way you had sought out her friends and everything else that might affect her, as well as in your quotation from Toeplitz, which reduced us both to tears, that I cannot sufficiently express to you all these different shades of feeling.

You may expect to find in Sidonie your own character, your sensitiveness, your generosity, your indulgence, not all your spirit, not more than your own charm, but much both of the one and of the other. Without being beautiful, she is pretty, well-made and has pleasant ways. I am sure she will please our son-in-law, as I should like to call him already. She has neither too much nor too little shyness, and is a surprisingly good judge of things and people: I cannot say enough of the goodness of her heart. Her chicken-pox marks are not very deep: she has a fair complexion and good health: she has no difficulty in pleasing: no one could be more generally liked. She attends a

school which, between ourselves, is well adapted to form the character. M. Coralli has been giving her lessons in deportment since the day when I learnt your intentions. She has already made much progress, and will make more in all directions when she is with you, and I foresee the greatest happiness for all of us.

My memories, my regrets, the loss of so many people who were dear to me, the kind old ladies who are dead, the young ones who have become old and ugly, while you, who are younger than they in truth, look better than you did twenty years ago, having put on a little plumpness, which suits you very well . . . the young folk who have become heads of families, the kind ones who are now troubled and troublesome, the happy ones who are now a worry to me, the unhappy ones, who flood me with their tears—these are the things which prevent me from following you to Paris. But in any other place I shall always be glad to see my dear Sidonie again, and to lay at your feet my tender, unalterable, and respectful friendship.

By the 24th of June at latest, I expect by the 20th, we shall be at Toeplitz. I can hardly contain my joy at seeing you again, also M. le Comte, who will permit me to salute him in the most friendly manner possible.

Madame de Ligne is really touched by your remembrance of her, and charges me to thank you for it, and to assure you of her attachment for you.

XIV

To Prince Auguſte d'Arenberg[1]

Toeplitz, July 20th, 1807.

Well, here I am, I have seen him, and for fear I should be too partial, from having been well treated by him (though he has not a particularly caressing way with him), I am the only one of the regents or ex-regents who did not arrange to be presented to him. They amused me, all these confederate princes, with whom I dined every day, and whom he had assembled, all except Prosper, who was at the wars, and the Regent of Lichtenſtein, who is cutting his teeth. I said to them that they seemed to me to be there as if in the valley of Jehosaphat for the laſt judgment, and with a great imperial roar of laughter they said to me in chorus: "*touchours aimâple.*" I cannot say of him what Ali says of Azor, neither as regards his appearance, nor his expressions, nor the intonations of his voice, for I liſtened to him from the gallery, where I had passed in with the crowd: but he has certainly the air of a man of military experience, firmness, and foresight, rather than of genius, for he shows none of its unreliability. A Saxon lieutenant-colonel, who was with him all

[1] Prince Auguſte d'Arenberg (1753–1833), famous for his efforts to save Marie-Antoinette during the Revolution.

through the battle of Friedland, told me that he remained on foot, under fire on some rising ground, from whence he saw so well that, pencil in hand, he gave his orders on maps which he ordered his aides-de-camp to carry to his generals. When he saw the Russians make a move, he said: "Ah, they are going to manœuvre. I must give them some tactics." And immediately he gave orders to profit by the opening.

When he arrived, he took a bath, sending off meanwhile several couriers, and talking with several ministers, and the next day he was on horseback at five o'clock in the morning, without any other following than a few aides-de-camp (for he has not a single man to guard him) to the hospital, to speak to all his wounded from the Russian campaign; then he visited the fortifications, and afterwards inspected the cadets, without any warning, and questioned and examined them on the most difficult mathematical points.

I met Talleyrand, who had just arrived: I went up the stairs quicker than he did, for he had not broken his journey since Koenigsberg. You can imagine that he was pleased to see me, for you, he and I are the only Frenchmen left in the world who are not really French. He would have been very glad to find you also in Vienna. They served us a dinner of thirty covers, and we were left to ourselves, until one in the morning, when I left him, from discretion, against his will, and returned here.

He told me that the Emperor Napoleon (I think one is allowed to call him by that name) has never been so grand as at Oesterode, where he had nothing to eat

but ſtinking shellfish, was lodged in a wretched hovel, surrounded by the corpses of men and horses, all covered with dung, had everything againſt him, even his army, though no one dared to show it, because he had sworn that he would suffer anything to humiliate the Russians.

They were very pleased with the ſtraightforward conduct of Poniatowsky, whom no one could have blamed, if things had turned out otherwise. He should arrive to-day in Dresden, with Malachovski, Stanislas Potocki, etc., for the organization of Poland, where they will mix up a little of the conſtitution of May the 3rd with the sovereignty accorded to the king of Saxony, under the title of duke of Warsaw. This name made me laugh, and I asked Talleyrand if it was the same as the duke of Dantzig. He said that the title had been given out of delicacy towards us, so that certain malcontents in Galicia should not think that the kingdom of Poland was going to be re-eſtablished, and so that we should not be asked anything about it.

Jerome is king of Weſtphalia, and has the possessions of the king of Prussia, and Hesse, Fulda and Brunswick. These three princes will receive pensions.

Talleyrand was waiting for Vincent, in order to treat about Braunau and certain similar matters. He says that we all owe this man a great deal, for his prudence and the way he has smoothed over disagreements and rumours of them, and abortive plans for making war, which nearly spoilt everything. The king of Prussia, who wore the order of the Legion of

Honour and a moustache, looked like one of Alexander's aides-de-camp at the interview at Tilsit, and blushed and stammered. On the day that the treaty was signed the Czar said: "This is the anniversary of the battle of Poltava, and is another happy day for the Russian empire." Napoleon, who prefers to increase his own size rather than that of his empire, and who enjoys fighting more than what he gets by it, liked his interview better than having to go as far as Riga one way, and Grodno the other.

I have no idea what he will or will not do about the Turks. But he did say: "I wish well to Selim; he was my intimate friend." Alexander embraced Oubril when he arrived, and when the English cabal had him disgraced, he gave him twenty thousand roubles as a pension, just for luck. Who dares go on making coalitions after that? If we had made any kind of move, the French would have signed peace with Russia immediately.

I do not suppose that any enthusiasts will pretend to regret their exhaustion, or the defeat and insignificance of the Prussians, who will only be in the fourth rank after this. For the rest I think this partition of Europe is unimportant, and will last no longer than its author does. The pen has made it, and the pen will unmake it again, even if people try to keep to it. The Spaniards are to be marched against the king of Sweden, who has just demanded the restoration of Louis the Eighteenth to the throne. No one takes any notice of England; she can do what she likes.

We all say, when we want to finish a letter, that the post is just going. I did not want to, but this time it really is true, and I shall not tell you, dear friend, how dear you are to me, for your tastes, and your good taste, and for the memory of an affection of which I am always certain, and for your tender and lasting attachment to me.

XV

To the Emperor Francis I

Autumn, 1809.

SIRE,

I thank your Majesty for not having visited upon me more severely your just indignation. It is the result of my imprudence, in having left the letters of the Comte Gruenne for twenty-four hours in the hands of another person, where they were copied without his knowledge. I am the more to blame, since the letters of General Gruenne contained the wish that they should be destroyed. The publication of his writings against his wish and mine is a terrible abuse of confidence. I had explained my doubts to him, and asked him certain questions on his conduct of the campaign, and he wrote to me at Buda-Pesth, from his house to mine. We had neither of us any idea that, by the carelessness of one man and the treachery of another, our correspondence could be read by an indiscreet person. As soon as I discovered that this had occurred, I burnt the originals. I only kept and copied what could not compromise either great personages or those who are not in such high positions. Although I have not spoken of all this to the Comte Gruenne, whom I have not seen since, I feel that he has every reason to be vexed with me. But the little I have said hitherto

about the affair has been with the intention of justifying him in the eyes of those who would not treat him fairly.

I implore your Majesty not to blame me for this, for it was only the ardent zeal that I have always shown in your service, which made me inform myself on these recent events. All was done with the best intentions. I wished to excuse and not to accuse whoever was concerned. The loss of my appointments would be less painful to me than the loss of the favour which your Majesty has always shown me, probably in consideration for the devotion which your Majesty well knows I have always had for your august person.

I will atone for this error by the greatest devotion to my duty, and I reiterate my prayer that you will not withdraw your favour from a servant who is worthy of it. I repeat my apologies for the harm which I have done, certainly with no ill intention. I cannot increase my devotion for your Majesty, which is ready for any sacrifice, and has always been too great for expression. With expressions of the deepest reverence I am, sire, the humblest, most faithful, and most devoted servant of your Imperial Majesty.

FIELDMARSHAL PRINCE DE LIGNE.

Tuesday morning.

XVI

To Madame Caroline Pichler[1]

Vienna, June 1st, 1812.

How will you take it, madame, if one who is so unfortunate and awkward as not to have obtained the honour of your acquaintance, ventures to take the liberty of writing to you. Worse still, if I wish to tell you what you do not know; as, for instance, the fact, which I am sure is unknown to you, that your romance, which is not in the least over-romantic, is one of the best that I have ever read. I should like to tell you why it is written neither in rosewater, nor in gall, like so many others, which pall upon one, or horrify one, or make one yawn. I do not weep to order. Your Agathocles made me shed some quiet tears. There is never anything unlikely or forced; and as much happiness as you can arrange for. All is chivalry, distinction, sensibility, frankness; with the exception of one or two rogues, to throw the honest and delicate characters into relief, all are handsome, young, well-dressed, courageous in war, and brilliant at the court: the charming, piquant, interesting, witty figures of the women all seem to live; and they all

[1] Caroline Pichler (1769-1843), writer and holder of a salon in Vienna.

differ from each other. Each character has its style and physiognomy, and each is true to itself. The plot is well sustained throughout: there are no complications beyond those which are necessary to interest, agitate, disturb, and torment thoroughly, when a catastrophe is required.

Your Calpurnia is the most delightful thing that has ever been created: she is a masterpiece: I laughed in my mind, if I may use such an expression, until I was obliged to weep from my heart. As for your colouring, madame, it has a freshness, a truth, a power to please, which are inexpressible. Your charming descriptive style, elegant without being laboured, your accurate comparisons, the depth, novelty, and subtlety of your thought, the reflections to which you give rise, without exhausting your own, are further reasons for your admiration. You warm the feelings, without seeking to inflame them. You do not fatigue by an excess of riches, and preserve a happy variety throughout.

Unfortunately, I only know the language of the camp. I can do what is required for my profession, and from time to time, when I have the good fortune to write simply, may attain to historical narrative. But I cannot err in the praise of your German. I have perhaps dared too greatly in speaking of your colouring, but it seemed to me that this appeared even in a translation. That of Madame de Montolieu[1] is so pure in style, so simple, and so well written, that I

[1] Jeanne-Isabelle-Pauline Poliei de Bottens, baronne de Montolieu (1751–1832), a prolific writer.

think I can judge of this point from the little I can follow of the original. Your prose rises so gently and so appropriately into poetry, that there is no feeling of abrupt transition when you return to the level.

One of these days, madame, I shall descend from my refuge on the Cœlian hill, now called the Kahlenberg, for the privilege of paying my respects to you.

If I had not that of your acquaintance, what would Wieland and Goethe say when I saw them again? The friendship with which these two celebrated men have so much honoured me almost gives me the right to merit your own. They say you are kind: your heart is spoken of as often as your intelligence. Myself, I must believe you unkind; for your book is an epigram against the world in general which seems at present to disparage it. I have omitted to speak to you of religion: and I should ask pardon of God for this. How sublime, brilliant and inspiring yours seems to me! You are right to depict its triumph: and most adroit in not losing, for its sake, the gracious forms and beautiful names of the pagan world. You present a Christian philosophy which affords a secure and consolatory refuge against all storms. You elaborate it with a touching fervour: if the purity of the earthly paradise could be restored, Fénelon would return to the world and ask permission to embrace you. I myself ask that of laying at your feet the homage of those noble sentiments which you inspire, of friendship, respect and admiration.

EXTRACTS

Extracts from "The Prospect of Belœil"

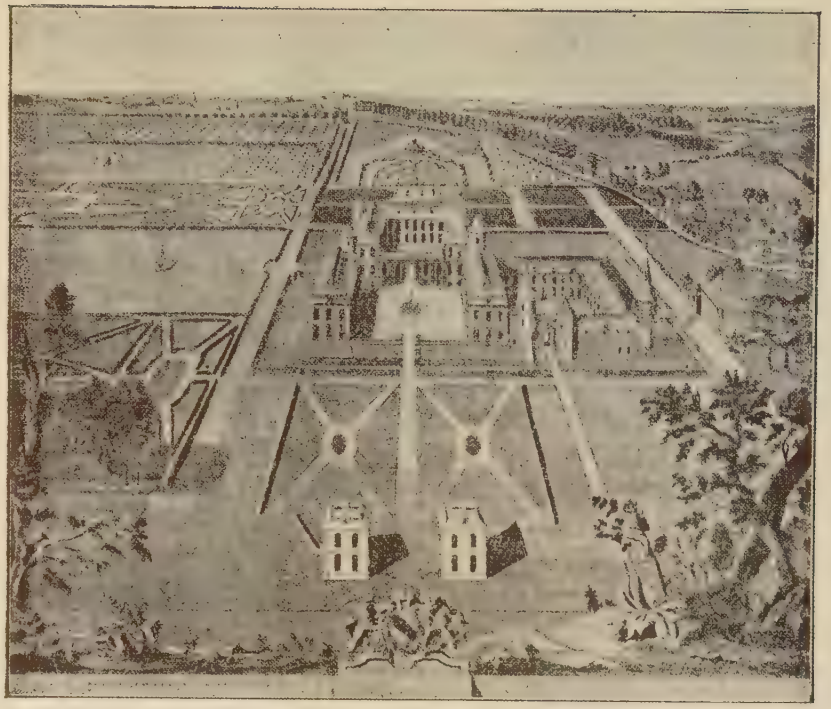
. . . The cottages of my shepherds, of whom there will be many, will make a kind of village, all set out in order at a certain distance, and hidden by trees, which will be leaning over the walls of my greenhouses and kitchen garden, in such a way that the whole effect will only be visible from one point. I shall see the rustic shelters, clean, uniform and covered with thatch, of seven or eight hundred sheep; and of other flocks in proportion. The sleek cows of Switzerland will present each night their udders, as bountiful as those of Cybele, to my herdsmen, their wives and mistresses, who will sing and play their rustic instruments, as clear and cheerful as their voices and, when they are fatigued by the songs of the village, there shall be bagpipes to rest them, and every kind of horn, and shepherd's pipes, and great flutes, like those of the Tyrolese.

These shepherds and shepherdesses shall wear a costume worthy of the dignity and simplicity of nature, of which they are the high priests. My bulls will have a menacing air: and the young pupils of my dairy farm will play together on the banks of a small lake, which I will have dug in the middle of an enclosure of forty acres.

. . . In my plantations, which are already well grown, and afford many contrasts of height, and of colour of foliage, there shall be an Indian Temple, where I shall go and eat ice-cream. This will be a room open to the air, where there will be twenty little columns, in two ranks round a square: and there will be another little room up above, diminishing in size towards the roof, which in appearance, will be a third story, but will not be used. This will be of wood painted white, very delicate and very carefully carved. On the side towards the plain, this Temple will only be cut off by the ha-ha,[1] which will not impede the view either from it, or from the Chinese Temple, which is to be used as a pigeon-house. The present ice-house will be concealed by a mosque, and a clump of lime-trees, which grow more beautiful every day.

My work-sheds will not be seen all at once, and they will follow, like all these groups of buildings, the laws of perspective. In order that the ground covered by good turf shall be as large as possible, towards the part which I am laying out as a garden, which will be separated by the graceful windings of the ha-ha from the part where the lake and river are to be excavated, I shall make the mausoleum of Adonis in a little corner shaded by cypresses: elsewhere I shall make a hill, of considerable elevation, which will appear very natural and suited to its position, and will dominate my Gardens of All Nations, on which will be the column of Marathon. Instead of the names of the

[1] A sunk ditch.



PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE CHATEÂU OF BELOEIL IN THE 18th CENTURY.

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ten thousand Greeks who were there, I shall have those of Cæsar, Hannibal, Epaminondas, Alexander, Xenophon, Maurice, Frederick, Henry of Nassau, Farnese, Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, Catinat, Gustavus Adolphus, Charles the Twelfth, Eugène, Montecuculli, Antoine de Ligne (the Big Devil) and Lamoral de Ligne. Also vacant places for a king and a marshal who are in no way inferior to those I have mentioned.

. . . As the springs in my pheasantry give me enough water to do whatever I like, and in addition to turn several mills and make a stream which flows into the Dendre, they shall be conducted in pipes across my English garden and shall plunge with as much noise as they can make into an archway, to reappear very quietly by another close at hand. These will be surmounted, on one side by a Temple of Saturn, severe in treatment, which I have already begun in marble, on the other by a Temple of the Sun, and on a third by a Temple of Venus. The interior will be a salon treated in the manner of the one at Bagatelle. Saturn will face the English Park, the Sun the cascade, the Long Water, the orangery and the castle, and Venus a mysterious part of the Garden of Philosophers. That will, indeed, be an amusing idea. . . .

. . . The façade of the Temple of Saturn will be adorned by a Tuscan order and by garlands already carved in the most magnificent style, and the pedestals of columns which promise to be the most beautiful that have ever been made. The other side will have

columns of the Corinthian order, surmounted by a sun in bronze, and a great many mirrors, marbles, pieces of gilding, and so forth.

Everything must be there to make this temple the most brilliant in the world. The sun will undertake himself to be its most brilliant ornament, since it is exposed to the East. The façade of the Temple of Venus, will be painted in frescoes in the most agreeable manner, with roses, endless Cupids, and inscriptions such as:

CRAS AMET QUI NUMQUAM AMAVIT, etc.

with allegories, in charming colours, both fresh and lively, for I feel too much respect and gratitude for the only beneficent Deity, after the Sun, to attempt to execute my ideas of her other than in painting. . . .

. . . There will be a little melancholy walk, where those who emerge from the temples will gather together. Those with sad thoughts will be able to give themselves up entirely to the little miseries which often afford pleasure, and to which one must yield without a struggle. Who has not experienced vexations, hindrances, family interference, spite, indolence, anger, misunderstanding, bad news, and envy? Those who feel more cheerful can think of reconciliations, hope perhaps, if they like, of change. . . .

Extracts from "The Surroundings of Belœil"

. . . Half a mile away, towards the East, among the woods, which do not prevent it from enjoying one of the most delightful views in the world, in a wide valley adorned with villages, convents, castles, hamlets, and limekilns, stands a castle famous for seven hundred years, now called Baudour, and formerly Bois d'Ours, because there were so many bears in the neighbourhood. I have left the interior its appearance of nobility, age and worth. I have broken down the gables, and filled up the moat, except on the south side, where I have planted vines. To make it regular I was obliged to copy the projecting angles on the left, and what I have built on the right is the same; the whole represents the first order of battle of Hannibal at Cannæ. There is a roof in the Italian manner, with trophies of the chase, representing each of its varieties, and certain trophies of war, love and vintage. All this is painted in fresco, on one side in green, and so are the two pavilions at the gate, the barriers, the Chinese lanterns, and the rails, which surround the courtyard, supported by posts at regular distances from each other. The inner court is in the Chinese style, on one side imitating blue and white porcelain, and on the other Egyptian marble. It is at once a garden and an aviary. There are trellised porticos to make the other side correspond. Some

of the columns are painted pink, and others yellow. The staircase is even more harlequin. The roof of the stables is a whole palette of colours. In short, there is about this house, from which I desired to remove all air of pretension, as much oddity, extravagance, even folly as I could contrive, with all the gracefulness of the hunting for which it is devised, and the stags, boars and wolves come right under the windows of this gay and extraordinary place. . . .

. . . A garden of Eden is the best that can be said in favour of the English gardener. It is satisfactory to be able to quote the terrestrial paradise in one's favour. The little that Moses can tell us of it shows us at any rate that it was not laid out by Le Nôtre. It was, said he, a place of delights. A river came out of the ground to water it, and was divided into four streams. One was called Pison. From what he says, you would think it passed through the land of Eldorado (*see* Genesis, p. 4). Another was Gigon. The other two are well known. With these four water-courses, our first father might have made the loveliest gardens in the world, and it would not have cost him so much.

Horace has drawn an English garden for us: *Qua pinus ingens, etc.*, is the best description of one, the most delightful, the most attractive: that little brook which struggles to escape has been my pleasure to create, even more than to read about. When we say English garden, we should remember that it is only the name of convention, for it is rather a Chinese garden, but as few people know that the Chinese have

distinguished themselves greatly in this line, as in many others, we must conform to accepted ideas. But it is quite certain that it is from them that the English derive their reputation. It was the Chinese who knew how to profit by these falls of water, these fortunate chasms, these horrors full of charm, these caverns, these ruins, these prospects. . . .

. . . I think that the little bits of architecture, the obelisks and the temples of the English are due to their travels in Greece. Their verdure they owe to their fogs. The Seine is as valuable to Paris in this respect as the Thames is to London, but we do not employ it. The French complain of these fogs, and do not do justice to their beneficence. . . .

Extracts from "The Prospect of Gardens in Foreign Countries"

. . . But let me have no sketches of great things. This kind of thing must not be bungled, once it is started. I will have no ruins of Palmyra in the style of those of General Conway. Their whiteness, their low columns, are in the worst possible taste. Their carefully preserved vaults are ridiculous. I like ruins when they give me an idea of important events which have taken place there, and celebrated people who have inhabited them: but when I survey the Greek buildings of some English owners, and the Gothic ones of Mr. Walpole, I am tempted to believe that the work was inspired by the delirium of a nightmare. I liked his castle of Otranto: but this one on the Thames is just as silly, and not so amusing. . . .

. . . Let me have no more ruins of temples and amphitheatres, which obviously never can have existed. The image of destruction is always terrible: and these earthquake effects have a bad effect on the spectator.

. . . Temples ought to inspire a sensation of pleasure, or recall that secret terror which the ancients felt when they entered them. But what can I feel, when I behold them one upon another, in a kind of

templomania which spoils even those, which, like the Temple of Friendship, would merit our eulogies. Lord Temple was too much inclined to live up to his name. Stau[1] has too many buildings, and a Catholic church is not more amusing in a garden than elsewhere.

. . . Further, I would not have you believe, O atrabilious milords, that you have done enough when you have sought out some dense forest or lonely countryside, and have placed there some so-called castle. You consider this a park, and furthermore, you call that a garden which with us would only be an orchard. This was my opinion of a great country house, where the princes of England were brought up, I was told, and which belonged to the Duke of Beaufort. These are but deserts, wild places, and pure savagery.

. . . I love your fogs to distraction. They are certainly meant to keep your lawns in order: but it is a cruel thing that you never have water in your gardens. One feels as if one would die of thirst. I should particularly mention the case of Lord Batitor (?), but it is true that he has only what falls from heaven there. It is useless to make your Chinese bridges over hollows, to make one think that there is something underneath. You cannot fool us for long: and the little pools, that Lord Mansfield tries to pass off as rivers, from the windows of his mansion, only draw attention to a misfortune that it is not in his power to remedy.

[1] Stowe.

. . . The English might diminish this evil, if they had not such a passion for moving away from the Thames. The Duke of Marlborough has made up for it by the ſtream which he has diverted through his park,[1] where it becomes wide, and rapid, and falls with plenty of noise. I muſt also commend the Earl of Pembroke,[2] who has made his run in a kind of canal. His two gardens and those of the Princeſs of Wales,[3] are the beſt I saw.

Wimmelton[4] has very little merit in my eyes, though I heard nothing but good of it. The house should have been built with more ſtories, and the woods are not sufficiently dense. The whole thing looks poverty-ſtricken and mean. Oh, these are not the true beauties of nature! How much of Hudibras there is in their gardens, and how many glaring errors of taſte! Their grottos even are nothing to speak of, that of M. Tillney has really coſt him dear, for all the pleasure he gets out of it. I only like the one at Thwiknam,[5] because I picture to myself Pope working there at his Essay on Man. He could work juſt as well at a garden for his, which now belongs to Lady Stanhope, though small, is moſt delightful.

. . . I do not like half-foreign things. The Duke of Devonshire has brought back from his travels beauties which do not suit his country, and the French and Italian traces at Chiswig[6] did not please me at all.

[1] Blenheim. [2] Wilton. [3] Kew.
[4] Wimbledon. [5] Twickenham. [6] Chiswick.

But what could be more beautiful than King's Weſton, and the view of the river Nersan[1] and all the country of Wales? What could be more superb than Windsor? What a foreſt! What majeſty! What natural beauty! What charm in the watercourses which diversify these great ſtretches of country!

. . . The house of the Duke of Cumberland, not far away, is charming. All the views of it are smiling and varied. It is the kind of place that leaves you disguſted with everything artificial.

. . . I admire above all things the single span bridges over the ſtreams which the English make, which seem to convert them into lakes, the natural waterfalls which are heard from a great diſtance, and particularly the trees, as ancient as time itself. Such of old were the oaks in the foreſt at Dodona, which gave oracles. I was tempted to consult them here. They filled me with that sense of awe which comes from the approach of a divinity.

. . . Blenheim and Kew are chiefly noted for borders and rare shrubs: after that Wilton, because of its bridge, its mill, and the ſtatues, perhaps rather too numerous, which adorn the house, and which I myself should prefer to see in the garden and the loggias. These are what gave me the greateſt pleasure in England, with the exception of certain country houses, which I only saw in prints.

[1] Severn.

. . . I do not speak of the architecture of this country. The heaviness of Sir J. Vanbrugh is as well known as his epitaph, which is an excellent piece of wit. Inigo Jones is the last who did credit to England in this line. He imitated the antique a little too much in his windows and his narrow doors. Greenwich would have been a great triumph for him, in my opinion, if he had joined the two wings of the building by a superb Temple, to be used as a mausoleum, full of urns for the ashes of those brave sailors who are the glory and treasure of the kingdom, and the wonder of other nations. Inigo Jones is very grand and simple in his work.

. . . I have not mentioned Sion House, formerly a Catholic convent, then the dwelling of Cardinal Wolsey, at present the property of the Duchess of Northumberland. It was not finished: but when it is, I am sure it will deserve much praise. It is on the banks of the Thames, near the superb view at Richmond, and the little house of Lady Harrington.

. . . This might almost be the country of the Eclogues, if only it were a little warmer. I was tempted to look for Tityrus, the wicked shepherd of Menalchus and Melibœus. I seemed to hear their words of love and poetry. I lent an ear to the sound of the flutes, but it did not come: on this greensward I wished to hear the shepherds singing of the faithfulness of their nymphs and their dogs; but in England the shepherds are not as gentle as their sheep, and the

tender note of the flageolet is little suited to these islanders. It is only in happier climes that one can celebrate the flames of Corydon and the cruelty of Alexis. The heat adds a kind of voluptuous pleasure to the dejection which it inspires. It is almost a joy to suffer from it. This is the cause of the sentiments which do not appear in colder countries. The shade, the well-spaced clumps of trees, their mass, the shafts of light between them, and the joy of overcoming difficulties, would recompense me in the southern provinces of France for the verdure of England.

"THE CHÂTEAU OF GEMEMOS"

Extract from "The Château of Gememos"

. . . There are two great jets of water at the entrance to the horse-shoe shaped courtyard, with a moat round it, whence a dozen jets rise continually, to the surprise of the traveller; there is a waterfall twenty feet high on the main road to the castle, backed by a long aqueduct, which brings water from the hills across the plain; there is a basin of charming and ambitious design, with an enormous fountain; there are three others with a score of small jets surrounding the central one: all these bring freshness night and day to the most beautiful lawns and shrubberies, which are too often neglected in Provence for oranges and olives. If you could think yourself anywhere but in a fairytale, you might almost complain of this prodigality of nature. . . .

"CHÂTEAU OF M. DE WALCKIENS"

Extract from "The Château of M. de Walckiens"

. . . A mile from a certain great capital, half-way up a fertile slope laid out in gardens and vegetable plots, near a canal bordered by meadows, pastures, and delightful houses, and framed among the most beautiful trees, which show the richness and goodness of the land, there stands a castle in the finest architectural style, surrounded by superb lawns. Their design is magnificent, and harmonizes perfectly with the mansion, the trellised pavilions, and the orangery. This was intended to delight the passers-by, who should pause on the main road to admire the noble and pleasing amphitheatre: but after amusing these cockneys M. de Walckiens wished to amuse himself. Without their spoiling the harmony of an apparently French garden, you are astonished to find, in what you think is an ordinary clump of trees, little copses to the right and to the left, dotted about on the greensward with considerable art: a natural garden—I will not say an English one, for that would be doing too much honour to a nation—which is already sufficiently pleased by its recent successes. From whatever point you consider this perfect picture, its author is always to be congratulated. His grotto, his ruins, his view-points, his little lake, the great bridge, the rock with its charming fall of water, another fountain which throws a great sheaf

downwards, his little bridges, the great waterfall, the streams which traverse an antique aqueduct, very well imitated, the little Temple, the beautiful turf, the plants of all seasons, the variety of rare shrubs from every part of the world—to all these an air of magic is given by the most careful selection and attention. There is a lake, an island, two sylvan scenes framed in vistas, and at least seven or eight views which are ornate and picturesque. To his cleverness in making his estate appear larger than it really is, he adds that of making the vast stretches of the country-side, which are seen from it, serve his enjoyment by appearing to belong to it. The canal, the river, and the meadows, which are not his, seem to do him homage. It is as if nature smiled on the man who knows how to treat her well, and wished to depend only on him. . . .

"GARDENS AT TZARSKOE-SELO"

Extract from "The Gardens at Tzarskoe-Selo"

. . . What a difference!—the Conqueror of the Turks is the Gardener of Tzarskoe-Selo. The lawgiver of the greatest of empires, the support or the terror of neighbouring empires, sows her lawns with her own hand. The homage which her great soul pays to those who have spread her glories as far as the ports of the Orient does as much honour to her as to her gallant generals. Tzarskoe-Selo, where the empress has what she calls her caprices, presents the most charming pictures on all sides. These so-called caprices are effects of water, or optical delusions, always well chosen and of great variety. A bridge of Siberian marble, in the Palladian style, the baths, the Turkish pavilion, the Admiralty, a kind of little town which has been constructed, the iron bridge, the ruins, the monuments of the victories of Romanzow and Orlow, the superb triumphal column for that of Czesma in the middle of the lake, a charming building on its shores, pleasing contours, a profusion of flowers and foreign shrubs, a lawn better kept than those in England, and just as beautiful, and Chinese bridges and kiosks—these are what make the garden the most interesting in the world. It is here that, releasing for a moment the reins of government, this great princess has taken up her gardening tools, though, in spite of all, she does not hold them so well as she would have held the sword, had fate not made her a woman, for the honour of her sex.

The Prince de Ligne's Advice to Gardeners

. . . O amateurs of gardening, be amateurs of humanity also. It is in your fields that you will find means to exercise that quality. You will see it close. You will learn to relieve its necessities. You will blend your two tastes together. One will assist the other, and Heaven will bless your work. Do not hurry your projects. Take your time. Choose those which are appropriate to the season. Let us say that the great heat is over. The fields are empty. We no longer see these charming groupings in which the rustic lover does not deceive his mistress without her consent. We no longer see those green hillocks, where innocence, love and pleasure often sport together. The vintager is no longer drunk with love and with the juice which the pretty feet of his beloved have trodden out. Gather them all together into your park. Dig, and sow, and plant. Renew your flowers, and water them. If the days are short, so much the better, the artisans of these pleasures of yours will make them last the longer. If the days are long, so much the better: they will relate to their aged parents, as marvels, the least little thing that the lord of the manor or the young lady from the castle have said to them while they worked. Respect and consult the climate and the season. Banish from about you the melancholy

spectre of the effects of poverty. These bodies, parched by the burning ardour of the sun, are a melancholy spectacle. Worn out by heat and fatigue, the poor wretches disturb the pleasure of a feeling heart, by all that their poverty obliges them to suffer. In the spring, or in autumn, one can console oneself for the trouble they take, because one is not afraid for their health, when, after their day's work is done, they can refresh themselves in the river, taking with them the young peasant woman who has assisted them in their toil by bringing them their midday meal to the field, and perhaps by filling their baskets with earth. This weaker sex, as it is in comparison with ours, who profit by their weakness and augment it every day, can be employed most charmingly in gardens. Gardening tools suit those hands which are only animated by the heat of the sun; and all that is not too heavy for them can be trusted to young girls, who sing as they earn what will help them to maintain some old mother, a little inclined to scolding, but just as tender towards her children as she was towards him who only thought of love and nature, and did not think of how he should feed his children. . . .

Letters to Eugénie on Dramatic Representation

I

You are one of the best amateur actresses that I know: you are twenty-three years old; and you are as beautiful as an angel. The comedies acted at your house are delightful. I cannot mention your name: you do not suspect that you are being written about. Let me call you Eulalie. It is a pretty name, and it sounds as if it came out of a comedy. These will not be love-letters any longer: love cannot be put into print: it imprints itself where it can. They will be letters upon dramatic representation, and more particularly upon amateur dramatic representations. They are the result of the taste which you have given me for the theatre, and perhaps of our conversations about it, for even at seventeen you were a pretty little lecturer.

It may be that Wiedman[1] will send me a treatise on war, but that would be stepping beyond the bounds of a just revenge; for the world is a comedy.

> "Upon the boards, clad in their various habits,
> Prelates, and ministers, and warriors shine"

said Rousseau. We are more truly comedians than those who display themselves to us from six to nine,

[1] Joseph Wiedman (1742–1810), the celebrated Viennese actor.

and indeed, when one has spent a little time running about from the court to the army, one can consider oneself an experienced actor. We play the king every day, without his whalebone corset and his tinsel; we play the lover, the husband, the honest man. This is usually the part in which we distinguish ourselves least. No matter, I will proceed to my argument. I have read the whole of Raimond de St. Albine,[1] Riccoboni,[2] *Garrick, ou les acteurs Anglais*,[3] and the charming and trivial Dorat.[4] The last only intended to please and to paint in his pretty pastel, which fades all too soon: he has succeeded: the others had a more serious aim, and have missed it. I have read d'Aubignac[5] and other older authors and their precepts: I have even read such moderns as Cailhava,[6] whose work is admirable. But they treat more of the action than of the actors, and their Theatrical Art is to write pieces rather than to act them.

There are many comedians who are good in themselves, but incapable of forming and elevating the taste of beginners, of reassuring their faltering steps, of guiding their willingness, of skilfully correcting their imperfections, of giving, in short, the advice that might make Roscius and Baron live again for us.

Talent must be fixed, assured and subdued by firm

[1] Author of *Le Comédien*, Paris, 1747.
[2] Author of *L'Art du Théâtre*, Paris, 1750.
[3] By Sticotti, Paris, 1769.
[4] Author of *La Déclamation Théâtrale*, Paris, 1766.
[5] Author of *La Pratique du Théâtre*, Paris, 1657.
[6] Author of *L'Art de la Comédie*, Paris, 1772.

discipline. Dramatic representation is not an unimportant matter. Apart from the pleasure it gives, which is essential, its utility arises from the merit of the actors employed. After having laughed, we should profit from it: we should avoid what is foolish, and perhaps in the end come to shun what is base. What is begun by the face, the physiognomy, the voice, the gestures, should be completed by intelligent study and understanding. The first qualities please, the second conquer. If an actor can conform to the great principles of art, and study their effect upon the public, he will rise to sublimity: there would remain nothing but to find for each individual the style which suits him best: for what is adapted to one actor is not adapted to another.

THE PRINCE DE LIGNE'S VISIT TO VOLTAIRE

My policy at Monsieur de Voltaire's house was not to be witty. My object in talking was to make him speak. I spent eight days with him, and I should like to be able to recall the stream of sayings, sublime, simple, gay, and charming, which flowed from his lips unceasingly; but it is really impossible. I laughed, I marvelled, I was always in a state of elation. With all his faults—his bad judgments, his infatuations, his lack of taste in matters artistic, his whims, his deceits as to what he could or could not do—he was delightful, fresh, stimulating and unexpected. His desire to be taken for a statesman or a savant reached a pitch that was almost boring. He was, at that time, a great admirer of the English Constitution. I remember saying to him: "Monsieur de Voltaire, you must add to that Constitution the Ocean which supports it, and without which it would not endure." "The Ocean," he replied; "it is on that that you wish me to reflect." A man from Geneva was announced, who bored him. "Quick, quick," he said; "bring me, Monsieur Tronchin "[1]—that is to say, we must pretend to be ill. The man from Geneva went away. "What do you think of

[1] Voltaire's doctor.

Geneva," he asked me, knowing I had been there that morning. Observing that he hated it at the moment, I said it was a detestable city, which was quite untrue. I told him in front of Madame Denis an incident which had happened to her, though I thought Madame de Graffigny had been the culprit. Monsieur de Ximénes had challenged her to quote a verse, of which he could not at that moment name the author. He knew them all. At last Madame Denis, to catch him out, recited a quatrain improvised extempore; saying, "Now then, Monsieur le Marquis, by whom is that?" "By a lady who is a wit-chaser, Madame." "Ha! ha! bravo!" said Monsieur de Voltaire. "Gad! she must have been a fool. Laugh at the story, niece." He was engaged at that time in altering and paraphrasing the *Histoire de l'Église* by that bore the Abbé Fleury. "It is not a history at all," he said, in speaking of it to me, "but a collection of tales. Bossuet and Fléchier are the only two good Christians I know." "Ah! Monsieur de Voltaire," I said, "you must also allow certain good fathers, whose children brought you up so well." He said much that was kind about them. "You have just been to Venice." he went on. "Did you meet the procurator Pococurante?" "No, I do not remember him," I replied. "Why, haven't you read Candide?" he said in a fury; for at that time he always liked one of his own works in preference to any of the others. "I beg your pardon, Monsieur de Voltaire! I was quite forgetting; but I was thinking of my astonishment at hearing Tasso's Jerusalem sung by the Venetian gondoliers." "What

do you mean? Explain yourself, please." "Well, as in olden times Menalchas and Melibœus sang, so these conjure up the voice and memory of their comrades on the Grand Canal in the lovely summer nights. One man begins as in a recitative, another answers, and so they go on. I do not think the cab-drivers of Paris know the *Henriade* by heart, and they would recite those lovely verses so badly with their harsh tones, their ugly croaking accents, and their windpipes and voices full of brandy." "Ah, if you want barbarians, Monsieur, go to the Welches,[1] who are the sworn foes of harmony and a people to make you vomit. There is a nation for you, and our wits are so witty that they must even put it in the titles of their books. A book of Wit is full of wit as wanton as that. The *Spirit of Laws*[2] is witticisms on legal subjects. I do not understand them. But the *Persian Letters* is a book I understand; that is a good book." "There are, then, some writers whose work you do not value?" "Certainly; d'Alembert, for example, who through lack of imagination, calls himself a geometrist; Diderot, who, to make one believe he has wit, indulges in declamation and rhodomontade; and Marmontel, whose poetic theories, between ourselves, are unintelligible. These people would say that I am jealous; that I mould my ideas to my own advantage. They think I am a fault-finder, a flatterer at Court; in society, too much of a philosopher; at the Academy,

[1] Voltaire's contemptuous name for the French when he was angry with them.

[2] Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois*.

an enemy to philosophers; anti-Christ at Rome, because of several jokes on its abuses and several witticisms on its Oriental modes; the teacher of autocracy in the Senate; a bad Frenchman for having spoken well of the English; thief from and benefactor of libraries; libertine because of Jeanne who has been credited with too much by my enemies; a pursuer and a flatterer of wits, and intolerant, because I preach tolerance."

"Have you ever seen an epigram or a song by me? They are the hall-mark of malice. These Rousseaus have consigned me to the devil. I began well with them both. With the elder I drank champagne in your father's house and at your godfather's, the Duc d'Arenberg, where he went to sleep at supper. I have had a passage with the younger; and because I said that he made me want to walk on all fours, here I am, banished from Geneva where he is loathed." He laughed at an impromptu remark, a miserable joke, and played the fool a little. He was at the height of his joy, when showing me a letter from the Chevalier de Lille, who had just written to complain of his having executed a commission for a watch badly. "You must be very stupid, Sir," the letter began. I think it was to me that he dedicated his oft-repeated witticism on Corneille, and I gave him text and verse when he asked me my opinion on it. "Black," I said, "without being comely." He did not spare me his Father Adam, and was pleased with me for having sheltered Père Griffet, of whom he was very fond, as well as Père Neufville, whom he commended to me.

He said to me one day: "They pretend that I am always down on the critics. Listen to me, do you know this? I cannot imagine how a man, who cannot spell and who sometimes attacks poetry as if it were a fort, could compose such an admirable quatrain on me.

> Candide is a little scamp
> With neither shame nor brains:
> How easily one sees in him
> The brother of Flea (*La Pucelle*).[1]

"You are in very bad odour with him at the moment," I said; "it is a quarrel about origin and original sin at the same time." A little joke made him smile; he often made one and liked to hear it. You would have said that he had quarrels with the dead as well as with the living. His changeability made him like them sometimes more, sometimes less. At that time, for instance, it was Fénelon, La Fontaine, and Molière, who were most in favour. "Let us play Molière, Niece, to the Prince," he said to Madame Denis. "Let us have his *Femmes Savantes*, which we have just been playing, in the Salon." He acted Trissotin as badly as it could be done, but was very much amused with himself in the rôle. Mademoiselle Dupuis, sister-in-law of Madame Corneille, who played Martine, pleased me excessively and sometimes engaged my mind, while the great man was talking. He did not like that. I remember one day when his beautiful Swiss maids, bare-shouldered because of the heat, passed close to me in bringing me ice-cream that

[1] The play is on the title of Voltaire's poem on Jeanne d'Arc.

he broke off his discourse, and seizing their pretty neck in either hand, he shouted out: "Be off, you throats, and choke yourselves!"

He said not a single word against Christianity or Fréron. "I am not fond of people who do not keep their word and contradict themselves. To write formally for or against every religion is the act of a madman. What, for instance, is this Profession of Faith of Jean-Jacques's Savoyard Vicar?" It was the moment when he was on the worst terms with Rousseau; and while saying that he was a monster, that exile was not enough, but banishment was his due, somebody said: "I think he is coming into your courtyard now." "Where is the wretch?" cried Voltaire; "let him come to my arms. He has been turned out of Neuchâtel perhaps, and the adjoining country. Somebody find him and bring him to me. Everything I have is at his disposal." Monsieur de Constant asked him, in my presence, for his own book on the history of Russia. "You are mad," said Voltaire. "If you want to know any facts, get hold of La Combe: no one has given him a medal or furs."

He was very much upset with the Parlement at that moment; meeting his donkey at the garden gate, he said: "Let me pass, I implore you, Monsieur le Président." His mistakes through his impulsiveness were frequent and amusing. He mistook a spinet-master of his niece's for his cobbler and made any number of slips. When the matter was cleared up, "Heavens," he said, "my dear Sir, you are a man of intellect. I set you at my feet, but it is I who am at yours."

A hat-and-shoe-merchant came suddenly into his drawing-room. Monsieur de Voltaire (who distrusted visitors so much, that he declared that he had taken a draught to be able to say he was ill, in case I had bored him) escaped into his study. The merchant followed, saying: "Monsieur, Monsieur, I am the son of a woman for whom you have written verses." "I can well believe it, I have written so many verses for so many women. Good-day, Sir." "It is Madame de Fontaine Martel." "Ah! ah! sir, she was very lovely to look on. I am at your service." (And he held himself in readiness to go back into his study.) "Sir, where I pray you, did you find the good taste displayed in your drawing-room? Your château, for instance, is delightful. Is it entirely your own idea?" (Voltaire returned) "Oh! yes, Sir, it is mine . . . I drew all the plans. Look at this outhouse and this staircase. Certainly." "What has brought me to Switzerland, Sir, is the pleasure of seeing Monsieur de Haller. (Voltaire went back into his study.) Oh! Sir, that must have cost you a lot. What a pretty garden!" "Oh! that," said Monsieur de Voltaire returning; "my gardener is a fool. I am the man, Sir, who did it all." "I imagine so. This Monsieur de Haller, Sir, is a great man." (Voltaire went back again.) "How long would it take, Sir, to build a château almost as lovely as this?" (Voltaire came back into the drawing-room.) Impromptu they played the most delightful comedy-scene you can imagine; and M. de Voltaire showed me many others even funnier still through his lively humour, his wit, and his changes

of mood: sometimes a man of letters, sometimes a noble of the Court of Louis XIV, and then again the perfect companion.

He was very humorous when playing the lord-of-the-manor; he spoke to his serfs as he would have to an embassy from Rome or the Trojan princes. He embellished every word. Wishing to inquire why he never had hare for dinner any longer, instead of asking about it plainly, he said to an old keeper: "My friend, do no beasts migrate any more from my land at Tourny to my land at Ferney?"

He wore on all occasions, grey slippers, grey stockings with rolled tops, a long waistcoat of cotton-twill down to his knees, a big, long wig and a little black velvet cap. On Sunday he sometimes wore a fine suit of russet silk, all of the same colour, waistcoat and breeches to match, but the waistcoat with big skirts, braided in gold in the Burgundian style, the braid twisted and wired, with big lace ruffles falling to the finger-tips, "for that gave him," he said, "the air of a nobleman." Monsieur de Voltaire acted like a tonic on his immediate circle and made them all laugh. He enriched everything he saw and heard. He once questioned an officer in my regiment, whose answer he found superb. "What religion do you profess, Sir?" was the question. "My parents brought me up as a Catholic." "That's a proper reply," said Voltaire; "you notice he does not say he is one." This seems a trivial story to tell and one destined to make him appear foolish; but you must try and imagine him, aflame with the brilliance of his imagina-

tion, radiating his wit in every direction, coruscating with bons mots, lending his fire to everyone, keyed to see and understand all that was worth while, abounding in sensitiveness, to which the whole world responded. All these qualities he brought to bear on whatever he wrote or thought. He made those who had the power think and talk, helped the needy, built houses for the poor and was an admirable landlord; kind to his villagers and good and great at the same time, a combination without which man cannot be completely one or the other; for genius gives scope to goodness and goodness adds reality to genius.

EXTRACTS FROM THE "MEMOIRS" OF THE PRINCE DE LIGNE

I do not know for certain the year in which I was born. I was christened unceremoniously by the Chaplain of my father's regiment, and I once lost a suit which depended on my producing my birth certificate, which no one could find. All I can tell you is that I was born before 1740 and that I had hardly heard people speak of Prince Eugène,[1] who had died a short time before, than I wanted, childlike, to take his place. That is the first thing I remember; and the second is that there was a war[2] going on which intoxicated me. I remember hearing people talk of the Battle of Dettingen, where the Ligne Infantry and Dragoons covered themselves with glory.

A man in my household called Leygeb, my German Secretary, told me—and I think he is right—that he had read in an old deed that we were descended from a king of Bohemia. He also told me that he had read in a tomb somewhere that we were descended from Charlemagne through a certain Thierri d'Enfer; and, in addition, that some genealogists think that we are of the same branch as the House of Lorraine, while

[1] Prince Eugène of Savoy, the famous general, died in 1736.

[2] The war of the Austrian Succession, 1743.

others imagine that we are an offshoot of the family of Baden. I think there must be a little of all these strains in our stock, for my father was so extraordinarily proud; and, again, what makes me believe that we have the blood of Charlemagne or of Witikind in our veins is that we have worn the Fleece for four centuries and have been princes of the Empire for two.

We have always been brave in our family, even the bastards, who were ranked as gentlemen and were proud to bear the title. I have seen a tomb with this inscription on it: "A bastard of the Ligne family killed in Africa." Many of my ancestors have been killed in battle. My great-grandfather, who was a General of no mean merit, was imprisoned for that reason in Spain, in which country he was president of the Council of War in Castile, Viceroy of Sicily, Governor-General of Milan, etc. He often won battles, was sometimes beaten, and was only taken after an heroic struggle. My great-grandmother, a princess of Nassau, a step-daughter of the house of Lorraine and a niece of Henry III, and my grandfather were killed in the woods at Baudour while out hunting by a wild boar which attacked them at their stand.

For some reason my father did not like me. We did not, as a matter of fact, know each other at all. For it was not fashionable then to be either a good father or a good husband. My mother was terrified of him. She was brought to bed of me in a huge, hooped-skirt, such was his love of pomp and ceremony, and she died as a result some weeks afterwards. I often received marks of his attention in the shape of

PRINCE CLAUDE-LAMORAL II de LIGNE
(after a marble medallion in the Castle of Beloeil).

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blows and prophecies that I should grow up into a tiresome person. All the same his death, which I shall write of later, had a profound effect upon me. He drove me from his house and went to live in the country; I came back from the war and only saw him two or three times between then and his death. But after that occasion we only recollect the goodness and the greatness in people. He was extraordinarily proud, and as majestic to look at from behind as from the front. He thought he was as great a Prince as Louis XIV, and was, in fact, almost as royal in his magnificence and in his gardens. But he made up for this opulence by ludicrous little meannesses. For instance, though he spent millions in building Belœil and millions on the extraordinary entertainments he gave, and the pomp which he kept up there, yet he scolded his servants when they offered a glass of wine to the priest or monk who came to preach during Lent. He said out loud: "Beer is quite good enough for that kind of person." It was pure eccentricity, for he was really most noble in his behaviour and in his acts. He had distinguished himself for his bravery in the War of the Succession, and also during the battle and siege of Belgrade. He was made a Colonel very young, and on the occasion when he was obliged to surrender in the Citadel of Antwerp, he said to his Commanding Officer: "At least, the enemy shall not capture my flags," and he bore them on his back and afterwards hid them in his wagon.

My uncle, Prince Ferdinand, was also a Marshal, and had distinguished himself at Ramilies, Oudenarde,

Malplaquet, etc. Though he was finnicky and a prig, he had some good qualities. For instance, he took great trouble to encourage my taste for war, was always speaking to me about it, and perpetually sent me to talk to his Dragoons, or made those who were the most distinguished or who had gained several medals come to talk to me. I say "most distinguished," for it is still, and was then, a regiment entirely composed of heroes. He had inspired me so much with his own hatred of the French, that it was a long time before I could get over it. It was a case of Hamilcar and Hannibal over again on a smaller scale. The Duc de Croy was the first soldier of that nation who came to see us after the capture of Brussels, and I was unable to meet him with any appearance of calm.

I had another uncle without knowing it. He was my father's eldest brother; as beautiful as the day; as brave as Cæsar; as fond of love as a cat. He was also apparently as faithful as a dog, for he wanted to marry his lady love. She was a charming creature, well born, too, as far as I know, but not sufficiently well born for our relatives to approve of her. They forbade the marriage: he was enraged. He threw up his commission in the army where he had distinguished himself: they were furious. He retired from life altogether: they were even more angry. He immured himself in a convent: they were mad with rage. In return he gave back all his money to my father and only kept for himself a third floor suit in our small house, a chaplain, a valet, and only a chair and a crucifix to furnish it.

Our large house having been bombed several times during the siege of Brussels in 1746, although a Marshal, my father, who had been shut up unawares in the city, made all the family and servants go to our small house, because it was less exposed. Even then three shells entered the door one day when I was sitting at the window up above. I was seven or eight at the time. I do not know what induced me to scamper down the corridor to the room where my unknown uncle was living. They stopped me getting there, however, and I went off to play somewhere else and did not think any more about it. But six or seven years afterwards I said one day on waking to my tutor Monsieur de la Porte: "I have dreamed my uncle is dead." I only knew the one who was called Prince Ferdinand, and so I said to him: "Prince Ferdinand died to-day at five o'clock in the morning." Two days afterwards I learned of the existence and the death of the recluse; and that I assure you is a completely true story.

My father said one day to my sister: "I am sure my son will be killed in battle, for you have the face of an heiress." I had hardly ever seen her or my other sister either, scarcely less ugly, who became Mother-Superior to a convent at Essen,[1] and a very good one, I am told.

My father was more or less in love with the Princesse C——. Some verses that my Abbé wrote for her, into which he put some myths that my father did not

[1] The abbey of Remiremont.

understand, made him very jealous, and he sent the Abbé packing. While waiting to find another teacher, to whom do you think they entrusted my nine or ten years? My father's pages. They were both called Baron de Hayden, and they died Generals on the Staff. Knowing quite well that they could only teach me military exercises—for they were with their regiment —they came from Mons simply and solely for that purpose.

The Abbé Verdier was replaced at last by another Abbé, the only one of my teachers who believed in God. He was a real old country parson, who told his beads, drew, and went out to shoot or to catch quails, making me carry his powder and shot and pick up the game. I used to struggle for this privilege with his little spaniel. That made me nimble and I began to shoot up. Soon it was found that my Abbé had nothing more to teach me, and so he was sent back to his village.

M. Dutertre was accused in front of my father of wanting to play the man of letters and write eclogues in the village, where there were several shepherdesses to his taste, so I was turned over afresh to another tutor. A gentleman of the Essart family, a mean-minded little man, but a brave soldier, who had been at the war in Bohemia and in Bavaria and was never tired of talking about it, was entrusted with providing me with an education which he lacked himself. So I had to fall back on my enthusiasm for war. The Siege of Prague, sallies, assaults—my brain teemed with

THE PRINCE de LIGNE AS A BOY.

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them. My tutor hardly knew that Alexander or Cæsar had existed, but I devoured Quintus Curtius and the commentaries that I found in the old Library of the Castle at Baudour and believed that they would come to life. He had only one book, Phædrus's *Fables*, which he used to make me learn by heart, while he went out riding. Once when he wanted to whip me because I could not remember them, I jumped at his face. I wanted to draw my little sword to fight with him! They parted me from this stupid teacher —a poor-spirited, bad-tempered man; after my second Abbé, he is the tutor whom I value least.

Since the Jesuits and the Cavalry had made so little response to my father's ideas, he tried a completely different sort of man to make me an infant prodigy. A follower of Arnaud,[1] of Pascal,[2] a man as brilliant, as enthusiastic, as eloquent, as uplifted as the best of the circle at Port Royal,[3] was chosen to put the finishing touch to my education. The finishing touch, they said, but how many fingers had there been in that pie already! He was called M. Renault, came from Roche-Valian, was tremendously argumentative, a profound theologian, and called the village priest "a crow cawing in God's church." He had a great reputation for wit with my uncle, who was stupid enough himself. The priest was accused of being a Jansenist.[4] I can still

[1] Antoine Arnaud (1612–1694), theologian and leader of the Jansenists.

[2] Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), anti-Jesuit and philosopher.

[3] Convent for Jansenists near Versailles, destroyed in 1710.

[4] Jansenism, founded on the teaching of St. Augustine, by Cornelis Jansen (1585–1638).

see two donkeys loaded with works of St. Augustine and other Fathers of the Church, as well as the Bible, arriving with the head of the Convent to crush my tutor. But he proved himself right; there was never any occasion on which he was wrong. The priestly cabal deprived me of a man of great brilliance. I had been a Molinist[1] without knowing it in the company of my two Jesuits, who had talked to me of Mme Guyon,[2] of Fénelon[3] and of the Doctrine of Quietism. I had also become a Jansenist with my ex-orator, who only spoke of Bossuet,[4] and made me study Montpelier's *Catechism*, Mezanguy's *Old Testament*,[5] the *History of Schisms*,[6] and other works. The first of these had made me knowledgable about Molina and Molinos. The Abbé of whom I have spoken, the only one who believed in God, had given me to read Marie d'Agrada[7] and Marie Alacoque.[8] But with all my ecclesiastical learning I did not know a word about religion. I know that because when I was fourteen years old there was talk of getting me confirmed. I then went to the village priest to learn everything from the Creation to the mystical difficulties. He said he did not understand it any more

[1] Miguel de Molinos (1640–1697), Spanish mystic and quietist.

[2] Jeanne-Marie de la Motte-Guyon, Bible commentator.

[3] Francois de Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai (1651–1715).

[4] Jacques-Benigne Bossuet (1624–1704), Anti-Jansenist.

[5] François-Philipps Mezanguy (1677–1763).

[6] By Bossuet.

[7] Maria d'Agreda (1602–1665), Spanish mystic.

[8] Marguerite-Marie Alacoque (1647–1690). Mystic, canonized 1864.

than I did. But I believed in Christianity, of which nobody had spoken to me, and I was a zealot for a fortnight. My father who feared that all these controversies had not succeeded in spoiling my wit had recourse once more to the French Army to form my morals and my religion. He recollected that the gentleman of the Essart family had been a Deist, and that I must believe the same thing. He therefore asked a Chevalier of the Order of St. Maurice, who was a Captain in the Hussars at Morlière, if he was a Deist too. The Chevalier replied: "Certainly not." So he was engaged to tutor me. The Chevalier was quite right, for he was an Atheist, and so we all became Atheists, or rather did not think anything about God at all.

Once more I lost my tutor. The combined efforts of all my tutors had not had the effect of making me concentrate on any one subject. History was for me a perpetual source of work. I was mad about heroes. I could not sleep because of Charles XII[1] and Condé,[2] and thought I must model myself on them. I swooned over Polybius; I made notes on Folard's[3] *Commentaries*. We talked of war. I had promised M. de Chaponais, a Captain in the Marines, to enlist in his Company. I would run away from home, and under an assumed name, I should have the endless joy of not being known until I had achieved the most heroic deeds. But

[1] King of Sweden (1682–1718).
[2] Louis II of Bourbon (1621–1686).
[3] Chevalier de Folard (1669–1752).

instead of this delightful project, a tutor, who was much wiser than any of my former ones, arrived to reprimand me. He abetted my taste for study, but he split it up into separate offshoots in order that it might grow, and gave me as a relaxation the study of those military authors among whom I commenced to take that position, lowly though it was, that I still occupy. M. de la Porte, as this tutor was called, was the third ex-Jesuit that I had had to instruct me. He brought from the College of Louis the Great all that sense of culture, of literature, of charm that has enhanced my life and moulded my character as well as my brains. He gained more right to my recognition, I think, than all, and I believe that any quality I possess was due to him.

Whoever my tutor, he could never teach me anything I disliked and soon discovered the impossibility of making me learn Chemistry or Mathematics (except that part which had to do with fortifications), or Astronomy, or even Arithmetic. It is for this reason that I have never been able to play cards or chess or backgammon.

During the five or six months of the summer that I spent at Belœil I took particular pains to learn to hunt and to be economical; this last due to my father, who, not wishing me to waste my powder and shot, undertook to make me buy it as well as my bullets, but in return to pay me twopence for every piece of small game which I brought home, half-a-crown for a fox or a hare, and a crown for a wild boar or a wolf.

And that was the only money that I ever earned till the day of my marriage.

My father used to share his box at the Opera with the Princesse de Horne who had just been married, and who was as beautiful as she was charming; but he was frightened that I might fall in love with her and would not let me come there. My tutor was very fond of the theatre. "Very well," said my father, "you can go in the pit." I used to see at close quarters many charming actresses, and nothing escaped me that was at all instructive at those delightful Vaudeville-Operas. . . . One evening I pretended that I had to leave the theatre; I stopped in the foyer. I found there a dancer, a young lady called Grégoire, whom I believed, being sufficiently stupid then, had looked at me with her pretty eyes. I made a proposal to her; she began to laugh. At first bewildered, then angry, I said to myself: "I must turn this scene to some purpose." The duel of M. Turenne[1] when he was only nine years old was fixed in my brain. "I am thirteen," I thought, "and I have never had a fight yet." An officer who was at least thirty years old was trying to go through the theatre to find his seat. I trod on his foot. "A plague on it, Prince!" said he, "you are clumsy." "No, Sir," said I, "I did it on purpose; you looked at me insolently." He began to laugh like Miss Grégoire; and so within one quarter of an hour I was twice treated like a child.

[1] Marshal Turenne (1611–1675),

When we came to Vienna, my father took me to Court, and, while he was engaged with the Empress, the Emperor took me into his rooms, behaved charmingly to me, and showed me into the anteroom where my father presently arrived. He was in a rage at once, and scolded me because I had entered a room which was reserved for those of the rank of Chamberlain and upwards. "That is exactly what he is," said Francis I. "I was going to give you a surprise." Everyone is more or less stupid at that age, and tremendously self-important—two qualities which go hand in hand. I never made the slightest sketch, I never wrote a note without signing it "Charles de Ligne, Chamberlain." I was in a transport of delight; to be a courtier at fifteen years old! And too, thought I, M. de la Porte, though I am very fond of him, can never be a Chamberlain. I shall be able to go to Court and to church without him. What a joy and what an honour! But, alas, when I got back to Belœil and Baudour, the fact that I was a Chamberlain did not prevent my being treated like a child still.

My father never consulted my tastes, but put me into a carriage, took me to Vienna and married me. I stayed in a house where there were any number of pretty creatures married or waiting to be married, but I never could discover which. They told me to sit at dinner beside the youngest, and I knew from my household that a marriage for me was in the air. But when, on leaving the table, I reflected on all I had seen, I did not know if it was my mother-in-law, an aunt,

or one of the little creatures I was destined to marry. However, a week afterwards I was married. I was eighteen and my little wife was fifteen. We had never spoken to each other; and it was thus that I accomplished what everyone pretends is the most serious event of one's life. I found her quaint enough for several weeks, and after that a bore.

My tutor, M. de la Porte, left me the day after my marriage, which made me terribly sad. He went back with my father, who left him in France with a pension that was too little to my thinking; so I went into debt for the first time in my life. It was for twelve hundred ducats, to buy him a little plot of land near his home at Agen, where he died a short time afterwards.

The marriage ceremony was performed by a village priest from Austria or Moravia, who recited litanies. It was the custom to appear in a dressing-gown and mine was made, even in mid-summer, of flame-coloured satin, worked with gold parrots sitting on many little trees embroidered in green. But what was my astonishment when my father, with an air of satisfaction and triumph at my surprise, made me slip on an ancient gown which I had already seen him use fifty times to wipe away drops of liquor. My father, for his part, looked like the bridegroom in a dress embroidered at every seam. He had, it is true, rained silver for the betrothal ceremony and gold for the wedding fees!

I do not know whether it was to get air or because I liked hunting, but I went out at six o'clock in the morning after my marriage night. It is a fact, however, that my mother-in-law woke us up before daybreak, because she was frightened that malicious folk might look in on us with the evil eye. So I saw the family into which I had entered was not concerned with higher magic.

My wife's aunt, the princess of Saxe-Weissenfels,[1] perhaps charmed by her nephew, offered to pay all my expenses at Dresden and to invite all Saxony and Poland to dine and sup with us at her town-house. I was an expensive item to this kind princess, whom I left captivated by a couple of thirty-two years, while I went on my way to the Low Countries.

My wife is an excellent woman, well-born, sensitive, fastidious, but without any personality. Bad moods with her are quickly gone, melted by the tears some trifle has occasioned. She is never difficult, for she is so sweet tempered. She gives her children everything they ask and even humours me sometimes.

Even if I had personally won victories, instead of only contributing to that end, I could never have been more happy or proud than on my first tour of guard-duty or on the day I first left for the front (1756).

My father, who had not troubled to make my acquaintance, was equally neglectful of my worldly

[1] Jeanne-Madeleine, Duchess of Saxe-Weissenfels (1708–1760).

affairs, and I spent my year's allowance in a month. He had foreseen that I should run into debt and had made it easy by cutting me off supplies entirely. Three Jews, Henzelkne, Schimelkne and one of the Levis, whose daughter was as beautiful as the day, took pity on me and lent me money at six per cent., accepting the risk of losing it if I was killed. I only owed them 200,000 florins, when my father died.

Prince Louis of Würtemberg,[1] who was my companion in war, in youth and in love, and was as poor as I was, always said to me: "My dear friend, if my brother dies before your father, all my Duchy is at your disposal."

I have always wanted to be more successful than other people. I have been successful in that respect at drinking, for no one has ever succeeded in making me drunk. But at gaming, my pride has been sadly dashed. It is true that one night after a day's hunting, when I was tired and sleepy, I won 30,000 ducats. I only woke up when an old hag, who was punting at "trente-quarante," pulled me by the sleeve to get me to pay her six francs she had tricked me out of. But when I had been led by this success into a game for stakes that mattered, I soon lost twice the amount I had won and, after having staked 8,000 ducats on one throw of the die and finished up my evening by losing 7,000, I gave up for ever the stupidest of all pleasures. I once won four or five hundred ducats

[1] Louis-Eugène, Duke of Würtemberg from 1793–1795.

from General Wrbna, Count Dessewffy and three other officers on the night before Breslau. I went on to lose a thousand to Rodeni, Tomassoli, Gabloffen, and Blankenstein, who is alive to this day. After the battle I asked after these gentlemen. My debtors had been killed; the others were in excellent health.

I have only once been drunk at the theatre, one day when I was acting Hortensius. All the town was present at my request, and I came on to the stage midway between sleep and a fit of the giggles, propping myself from time to time up against the scenery. Everyone was very ignorant of the French stage in Vienna, and in particular of the play,[1] and thinking it was all in my part, complimented me on my natural acting. It was a case of getting the best of Bacchus rather than Cupid.

I was a little tipsy another time at Carlsbad, where I put down a dozen bottles of wine with Lord Riversdale[2] to drown my chagrin at the departure of a lady, for whom I had a passion, whose husband took her away on the day of my arrival. I have been told I talked Latin and giggled all day.

Prince Charles of Lorraine[3] was so mild-tempered that he never forgot himself even on the rare occasions when he was angry. One day at the hunt at Belœil, when he was acting the important part of master,

[1] *La Surprise de l'Amour*, comedy of Marivaux.

[2] Perhaps Thomas Liston, Baron Ribblesdale (1722–1826).

[3] Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine (1712–1780), half-brother to Maria-Theresa.

getting angry with the crowd of onlookers, who spoilt the hunt by running down all the rides in the woods, he shouted: "May the foul fiend and all his legion take you," adding "dear gentlemen, if you do not mind," at the same time taking off his hat to them.

On another occasion the same Prince was arranging a masque of Olympus and allotted me the part of Mars. I believe it suited me very well, although I was still very young. The real reason of his giving it me was that he was in love with the lady who played Venus and I was the man he was least afraid of. Another time I was Apollo and, though perhaps hardly the Belvedere, I was happier in this role. I am told that the two magnificent dresses suited me to perfection. I was not bold or experienced enough and had too much delicacy, sentiment and feeling to take advantage of the opportunities, which alas! were never offered me again. With the labours of war and the joys of living they have receded into the past in a strangely definite manner. I was adored but did not see it, I fell in love and no one took any notice.

Madame de Cosel,[1] who was enshrined in the hearts of every romantic cavalier in Saxony, had been imprisoned in the old Castle at Stolpen for having wanted to kill her imperial lover Augustus. She admitted me to her friendship and told me that after twenty years' imprisonment she wished to leave the castle on

[1] Anne-Constance de Cosel (1680–1765), mistress of Augustus the Strong.

the death of her King, but, finding she no longer knew anyone, she stayed there for thirty years longer and was now likely to die soon. She also said that she had had time to sift thoroughly every religion and had finally selected the Jewish Faith, which she encouraged me to join as well. She even went so far as to give me her Bible full of notes in red pencil marks, the last time I saw her, telling me of the present beforehand, as though I was about to receive the largest of her diamonds.

I heard from her lips the story of the entry of Charles XII into Dresden, an event well known in history. Augustus and she had gone into the Arsenal, where he was accustomed to give exhibitions of wrestling and boxing, at which he was particularly skilful. There was a knock at the door; Augustus said: "Come in," and Charles kissed him, saying: "Good-morning, brother." Madame de Cosel stepped up to the King to advise him to arrest his royal caller. Charles, perhaps seeing her design, or, which is more likely, disliking women, made a face, which obliged Augustus to ask Madame de Cosel to retire. This she did, throwing a furious glance at the King of Sweden, and very much upset that the king of Poland[1] could not be present at the interview, which was a nine days' wonder throughout Europe. She told me numbers of interesting things and advised me not to drink or game, and not to indulge in intrigues at Court or on the field, as the conducting of them always led to unhappiness, telling me I should have all the glory

[1] Stanislaus II (1732–1798), last king of Poland.

I wanted without such things. Lastly, with the utmost coolness and with a good deal of meaning, she said: "To-day is Friday, it is almost seven o'clock, my sabbath is about to begin. You are going away in a few days, and I shall never see you again. Within three years you will lose your best friend, who now bids you good-bye for ever." I was overwhelmed, she kissed me, and I left. She spoke the truth. I received a letter some time afterwards, hardly legible and still less intelligible, full of magic or mystical sentences which the Devil alone could have construed, and I never saw her again.

I was late for dinner one night at the king of Poland's. I excused myself by saying: "One of your most lovely subjects, Sire, is the cause of my delay. Her secret will be well kept, for I cannot possibly recollect her name, which is five or six syllables long and devilish difficult to pronounce."

I have been, at times, so indiscreet, so imprudent, so foolish even, both when I was young and now, for the sake of a joke—though, I must admit, never for a spiteful or backbiting one—that I wonder I have not been involved in a dozen duels. I have been very near it several times, but always with gentlemen, who have finished by making excuses or using the old formula for getting out of fights: "You cannot have meant to insult me?"

Once I challenged Jean Pallfy[1] in order to revenge

[1] Jean-Leopold Pallfy d'Erdöd (1728–1791).

myself for a story he had spread about me. He was a general and I was only a colonel. Jean Pallfy looked like a nobleman, was handsome and brave. Joseph Colloredo,[1] who was there at the time and was miserable to see me involved in an affair which must have such bad consequences, wrote to Marshal Lacy:[2] "I have the honour to inform His Excellence that de Ligne's stupidity has involved him in a duel." The Marshal, thinking that he was referred to in the word "him," passed a sleepless night, thinking that I had committed some social blunder in which he was involved. He replied asking Colloredo to come and tell him all about it. Having put himself right, he wished to do the same for me, and went to Pallfy's house to see if he could not stop the meeting. Hardly had he arrived than I appeared with my second Prince Nassau-Usingen. I supposed that M. de Lacy was there by chance. I waited till in came my man booted and spurred, carrying his gloves like Crispin. The devil, thought I, is he so sure of putting me out of the way that he has his horse ready to fly? After a moment's silence, M. de Lacy said: "Very well, Count, if that is your last word, I am going to see the matter out. Begin." I looked at him in astonishment that he should wish to be present out of pure friendship for me. For he was quartermaster-general and, if the affair got abroad, would probably lose his position at Court. Then I laughed and drew my sword. I shattered Pallfy's blade into fragments by my furious assault,

[1] Joseph-Marie, Colloredo-Mels and Wallser (1735–1818).

[2] Maurice de Lacy (1725–1801).

for I pressed him like the devil and held him trapped against the wall. He replied by making several slashes as with a sabre, which so infuriated me at the thought of having my face disfigured, that I forgot he had no weapon and was slightly wounded, and would have pinned him to the wall, had not the Marshal with his cane struck down my blade. Pallfy proposed to take another sword and begin again. "I shall use mine," said the Marshal, "to stop you; be off, sir." I remonstrated, the Marshal wanted nothing better than to fight instead of merely standing by. But, seeing that I should exercise my right to continue, he was willing to let us finish.

As far as my memory serves me I have always been indifferent to fortune. With a little trouble I could have commanded, at twenty, the regiment of Ligne Dragoons, which won the battle of Kolin. I was on the field, my uncle had just been killed. But I have always hated any kind of intrigue. I thought that to send to Vienna, to write to the Empress, would imply such conduct. I might have been a field-marshal at thirty. Francis I's mistress withdrew her favour from me, and at that moment to recompense me wanted me to raise a horseguard of Walloons. I took the greatest care over the uniform—scarlet, yellow velvet facings, silver galoon; horses, caps, and equipment in the English style. My brave buffs would have been as gay as the heavenly host. I thought the whole thing was finished and boasted of my acquisition. I took no steps about it; the princess thought I was

doing so. The matter dropped. I should have been a marshal at thirty if I had secured this. I am not that now at twice the age, and I laugh about it.

Clumsiness did not become a man of genius like La Fontaine. It has done me a great deal of harm, as, for instance, in cases like that scene of the distribution of favour in *l'Étourdi*. In one of the Empress's letters I read in the first few lines that she was going to give a post I wanted to another general. I immediately sent to tell him and to compliment him. He sent his thanks at once to me and to Court. I went on to read "Do not tell anyone; there has just been a change and I think you will get it after all." The general's thanks arrived at Vienna just at the moment when my affair was on the way and so I had to pay for my premature politeness and for my tactlessness by the loss of the post.

I have been punished for my sins every time I have indulged my vanity, and that is as it should be. I disembursed more than 100,000 crowns in a settlement that I made for a little provincial relation of mine on the entreaty, the importunity, and the favour of the Duc de Bouillon, who was his relative too, but was also much attracted by him. My disinterested generosity made them talk for three whole days. I thought that the impression would be lasting and that all Paris would at least hail me as the man who refused to ruin a young nobody by making him sell his homestead at St Félix. Everybody forgot the incident, and the benefactor first of all. The wise-acres who

had warned me said I was in the wrong, and after that everything was forgotten.

I do not know why I did not take advantage of the friendship extended to me by Madame du Barry, before she conferred her favours. Perhaps it was shyness that made me refuse to ask her help in an important law-suit, and I even said to her one day at her toilette, when she asked me in the King's presence for a note of mine, that I would give it to her hair-dresser, La Croix, to make a curling-paper with, as I thought that was the one way of putting something into her head. She burst out laughing, and the King was delighted and repeated the joke twenty times later on; for he was the kind of fool who lives on other people's brains. I think I had had bad luck with poor Louis XV, for I had not seen him since the day I arrived as envoy. Owing to the feelings of some friends of my intimates, the Choiseuls, for whom I did not care at all, I neglected to make the acquaintance of Madame du Barry till a few months before the King's death.

I refused to mix myself up in a little matter between her and that arch-plotter, Madame de N-k-rck, who wanted to marry the King; and as she had set her mind on it, I wrote to her an explanation, saying: "Your favour, Madam, the King's favour, and God's favour give you a right to everything. All the same. . . ."

To make you believe all the stories that are attributed to me, I will tell you (for that is probably a true

one) what I said the day the Court was in an uproar because the King had banished the Comtesse de Gramont for having passed by Madame du Barry, brushing her with the edge of her crinoline. "That is the reward for a woman who forgets her courtesy (curtsey)." A propos of this, Field-Marshal Luxembourg, who was there, said to me wittily: "There are but three virtuous bodies left in France—God's body, Od's bodikin, and my lady's bodice."

When Louis XV was on the point of death, Madame du Barry's ladies-in-waiting deserted her, as is usual; I, who had taken no notice of her for five or six years, clung to her. I said to her scoundrel of a half-brother, the rake Du Barry: "The curtain is falling, you must leave." He replied in his funny provincial accent: "Why? If I am annoyed, I shall turn the kingdom into a republic." This was said with an air of indescribable swaggering, and I must say the game has been played by sportsmen more reputable but less amusing than he.

The new King, hearing that I had given a letter to the Queen from Madame du Barry to engage her royal interest in settling affairs, which by Madame du Barry's carelessness and disinterestedness had been left in a terrible state at Louis XV's death, said to me: "You have charged yourself with a pretty mission." I replied that I was the only person who would have dared so to do. I often had to pass by Luciennes on my way to Versailles. Madame du Barry had always been charming, and even seven years ago was still lovely to look at and delightful to know.

Who could have been in constant touch with the ill-fated Queen (Marie Antoinette) without falling in love with her? I never realized it more fully than when she said to me: "My mother is angry with you for staying so long at Versailles. Go and spend several days at your post. Write letters to Vienna so that she may see where you are—and then come back here." Her kindness and tact, combined with the idea of spending a fortnight without seeing her, made me burst into tears, which she was prevented from seeing by that charming quality of obtuseness, which kept all lovers at a distance. I do not believe in passions, which can never be consummated, and so that fortnight cured me of an attraction which I confess to myself here for the first time, and which I should never have dared to proclaim openly to anyone for fear of being laughed at. Who would believe that it was Mr Incognito,[1] who loved the Queen and all the Jules[2] with the same fervour, who gave rise, by his stupidity, to one of the wickedest slanders that have ever been spread about this unfortunate princess? He raised a storm at Fontainebleau in an instant on the subject of her relations with Madame de Polignac. The Chevalier du Luxembourg had planned to get rid of the Duchess, whose pretty head and kind heart he feared, and rule the Queen himself. Madame de Polignac one day said to her: "We are not yet sufficiently great friends to be miserable if we are parted. But I think that that state is beginning to exist; soon

[1] Probably the Comte d'Artois.

[2] The Polignac family were known as Jules.

I shall be unable to leave you. Let us forestall that moment. Let me leave Fontainebleau. Court life is not for me; I find everyone is too knowing here." Her horses were harnessed. The Queen kissed her, took her by the hand, entreated her, besought her, and threw her arms round her neck. The door was half open; Mr Incognito saw the picture as he came in. He began to laugh and went out saying: "Let me not disturb you," and told everybody that he had come unawares upon two lovers.

I have suffered the pleasure of being familiar with those sovereigns who often delight in being tyrants in their pleasures. Monsieur le Comte d'Artois wanted me to hunt the boar with him at Fontainebleau one day. "To-morrow at 7 o'clock we start," he said. "No, Sir," said I; "in the first place that is too early, in the second the Queen wishes me to ride to the Toulouse Cross with her." "I do not wish it." "That does not make any difference." "You will come with me." "No, Sir." "I give you my word of honour that you will." "And I to the contrary."

The next day at six o'clock there was a loud knocking at my door; the young prince was attacking, I defending. He called on our mutual friends; I barricaded the door. He burst it open, dragged me out of bed, crowed over me, dressed me with his own hands and almost carried me to the horse, which he intended for me; but at the moment he mounted his own, leaving me with my foot in the stirrup, I escaped. He threw himself off, almost falling in the act, and ran after me. I hid, and he passed me. I ran everywhere—through

the kitchens, where twenty scullions pursued me with as many saucepans, thinking I was trying to poison the King. I burst through a group of guards, who took me for an assassin, and chased me with their long staves. The young prince went off on a false scent; I had time to reconnoitre. I went up to the theatre and hid under a row of benches with covers. I was betrayed by some workmen who came there. Monsieur d'Artois found me, uncovered my feet, and tried to drag me out of my hiding-place by them. I kicked myself free and escaped at the other side. In trying to get out from the benches, I ran into a devilish great nail, which tore my right cheek and covered me with blood. The prince was miserable, consoled me, embraced me many times and went off to his aunt and his boar. I put salt in the wound, sprinkled it with spirits, took my handkerchief, and went off to find the Queen, who was waiting, and rode off with her. It was bitterly cold and I suffered terribly, but that is how I kept my word of honour.

I found myself suddenly in disfavour with the Queen, without realizing it, for some prank I had played on the Emperor or the Queen of Naples. I placed myself behind her chair at faro at Madame de Lamballe's in my accustomed manner and talked to her with my usual confidence, not knowing that she was angry. She did not speak to me; I thought it was because I was on intimate terms with her. I spoke to her; she replied tartly. I refused to notice it. Madame de Lamballe called my attention to it after the game, being more upset at it than I was and, as she was as kind as

she was pretty, promised to find out the reason. She learnt of it next day and told me. There was to be a ball in Paris. I hoped to offer the Queen an explanation: she saw I was very sad all day, for I had given up Paris for several years owing to her kindness, her charm, her grace, her sweetness. I do not know why, but the Queen told Madame de Simiane to disguise herself as her, told her part of our quarrel and went away saying I should be a good subject for such a joke. I was, indeed. Madame de Simiane showed me her lovely hands, which were, perhaps, not quite so perfect as the Queen's, as her proof of identity. I became very agitated, wept, I believe, and justified myself with extraordinary fervour. She said that we could return to our former relations. I explained to her that one could never trust kings or queens, and that the next day she would probably not carry out her promise and implored her, in order to reassure me, to pinch the lobe of her ear, whenever I did, during the play at Versailles, where I always sat under her box. I almost pulled mine off, but she never touched hers. I took the opportunity of speaking to her about it, as we left. She thought I was mad and the incident made her laugh so much that she quickly forgot her anger, which had never been very violent; and then from laughter to indulgence is only a step. People who laugh, always pardon; another mark for a charming young Queen.

I should never tell that story if it was to be read nowadays; but a hundred years from now these little details, which seem trifling, make pleasant reading.

I realize that from my own pleasure at the recollections of Madame de Caylus,[1] the memoirs of the Regent's mother,[2] those of Saint-Simon and fifty other writers of the time. There are a hundred other stories I have forgotten which are possibly better than this one.

I have no idea how, with his face, dress, accent and big wig like a poulterer, Cagliostro deceived so many people; I, however, caught him out. I took him a lady who pretended to be ill; he gave her some yellow, worthless medicine of his own, and, after telling me how he had cured all the harem of the Emperor of Morocco, said that when he was uncertain of the cure for some desperate illness, he would lift his eyes to heaven (which he then did) and say: "O Lord, so blasphemed against by Voltaire and Rousseau, Count Cagliostro is your slave; do not desert him." And God helped him. He had a hundred persons in his waiting-room; that was at Strasbourg.

One evening, when it was pouring, Ségur and I left Madame de Polignac's house. There was no cab in sight; no one to find one for us. "Let us pretend to be fighting," said I; "a patrol of the watch will come by, will arrest us, and will fetch a coach to take us to the police-station." We drew our swords and made a terrible clashing and then, when we shouted: "Are you dead or wounded?" the watch passed and,

[1] Marquise de Caylus' (1673–1729) *Memoirs of the Court of Louis XIV* were published by Voltaire in 1770.

[2] Elizabeth-Charlotte d'Orléans (1652–1732) wrote a series of letters on Court life.

frightened at our appearance, did not arrest us; so, in addition to the fatigue of walking home, we had that of our fight.

The life I led at my beloved Belœil was a very happy one, though wars, journeys, and other pleasures prevented me from being there as much as I should have wished. I used to go and read, as carelessly dressed as I liked, upon my island dedicated to Flora, where my swift boat at its moorings kept me from visitors, or I went to visit my work-people. I came home to bathe in my charming bathroom beside my bedroom. I went to bed and slept or wrote in my bed, usually till half-past three, when I dined with a dozen officers of my regiment.

When Jean Jacques Rousseau returned from exile, I went to dig him out of his garret in the Rue Plâtrière. As I climbed the stairs I was not sure by what method I should open up relations; but, accustomed to follow my impulse, a quality which has always served me better than reflection, I went in and pretended to have made a mistake. "What do you want?" said Jean-Jacques. "Excuse me, Sir," I replied, "I am looking for Monsieur Rousseau of Toulouse." "Here you will only find Rousseau of Geneva," he said. "Ah! yes, the great herbalist. I quite see your meaning. Heaven knows that plants and herbals are worth more than all the rubbish that he usually writes." Rousseau smiled a little and showed me the periwinkle he had discovered, which I did not know, and all the plants he

had pressed between the leaves of his folios. I pretended to admire this tiresome and commonplace collection, and he then returned to his work, spectacles on nose, and continued without paying any attention to me. I asked to be excused for my brusqueness, and implored him to tell me where Monsieur Rousseau of Toulouse was living, but, frightened that he would not understand and would close the interview, added: "Is it true you are so clever at copying music?" He went and found some thin little books, and, showing them, said to me: "Is that not good?" and began to talk of how difficult the work was and how talented his skill in that direction, just like Sganarelle[1] on the subject of log-cutting. The respect inspired in me for a genius like him had made me tremble at opening the door, and prevented me from showing to advantage in a conversation which would have become an essay in conundrums, if it had gone on a long time. It was only in the endeavour to find the means of entry or passage to his brain, in which I had failed, that I said that I was sure that he had only taken up these two menial tasks to damp the ardour of his fiery imagination, to which he replied: "Alas! the other occupation that I took up for my own education and for that of others has done me nothing but harm." I told him afterwards that the only point in all his writings on which I agreed with him was on the danger of historical and literary knowledge unaccompanied by critical judgment. He at once left his music, his periwinkle and his spectacles, went into every kind of detail in a more

[1] In Molière's *Médecin malgré Lui* (Act I, Sc. v).

perfect manner than he had in his writings, and sketched rapidly every shade of meaning in his theories with an exactitude, which he often lost when thinking to himself, because of the necessity of pondering and of writing down. Then he cried aloud several times: "Ah! mankind, mankind." I had sufficiently recovered my spirits to dare to take up the cudgels and said to him: "You must remember that those who complain against mankind are men themselves and often deceive themselves about other men." That made him pause a moment. I told him I was in complete agreement with him on the question of giving and receiving favours and on the onus of recognition, in the case of benefactors one neither likes nor esteems, at which he seemed pleased. I at once went on to that other thing most to be feared, ingratitude. He was off like a dart, paid me the most delightful compliments which he mingled with a number of little aphorisms which I took to heart, finishing up by saying: "If only Hume had kept his word"—and asked me if I knew him. I said I had a very lively conversation with him on his belief and that my judgments had always been impeded by the fear of treating him unjustly.

His wretched wife,[1] or servant, whichever she was, interrupted us several times with some ridiculous question about the laundry or the soup. He replied kindly, and by his words would have ennobled even a piece of cheese. I could not see in him the slightest signs of distrust of me. Indeed, I had carried his

[1] Thérèse Levassent, housekeeper, mistress and, later, wife.

line full sail without giving him time to think about my visit. Despite my wishes I set the limit myself and, after a reverent silence spent in gazing into the eyes of the author of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, I left that hovel, which was the home of rats and at the same time the sanctuary of genius. He rose, escorted me to the door with a certain kind of interest, but did not even ask my name.

He would not have remembered me, for only such names as Tacitus, Sallust, or Pliny interested him. But when I learned in that little circle of the Prince de Conti, the Archbishop of Toulouse, President d'Aligre and other prelates and officials, of which I was a member, that those two corrupt societies, the civil and religious, were going to stir up trouble for Jean-Jacques, I sent him that letter which he unfortunately gave every paper to read or copy, and which eventually appeared in every current issue. You may read it in the collected edition of his works, and also in his dialogue with himself, which is part of the collected works. He had the goodness to imagine, in his usual manner, that my offers of a refuge were a decoy, with which his enemies had hired me to tempt him—such madness had attacked the brain of this unhappy, great man, frenzied and straining at his leash. But his first step was good; on the day after receiving my letter, he came to show his recognition. Monsieur Rousseau was announced; I could hardly believe my ears. Even Louis XIV did not feel such pride when he received the Siamese Ambassador. The description he gave of his misfortunes, the portraits

he drew of his supposed enemies, the conspiracy of all Europe against him, would have been worth all my pains without the additional charm of his eloquence. I tried to divert him and bring him back to his rustic pursuits. I asked him why, with his love of the country, he came to lodge in the middle of Paris. He told me then his delightful paradoxical fancy of the advantage gained by writing of liberty, when shut up, of the spring, when it is snowing. I spoke of Switzerland and proved, without showing off, that I knew Julie and St Preux by heart. He seemed astounded and flattered. And so he perceived the *Nouvelle Héloïse* was the only one of his works, which convinced me, and that even when I could be wise, I could not be bothered to be. I have never been so witty (and it was, I believe, the first and last time in my life), as during the two conversations I had with Jean-Jacques in eight hours. When he told me flatly that he would await in Paris every attack the clergy and the state might make on his body, I allowed myself to speak several plain truths on his manner of understanding Fame. I remember saying to him: "The more you hide, Monsieur Rousseau, the more you are visible; the more wild you are, the more in the public eye."

His eyes were like two stars. His genius flashed in his looks and kindled fire in me. I remember finishing by saying two or three times, with tears in my eyes: "Be happy, Sir; be happy in spite of yourself. If you will not live in the temple I am to build for you in that land over which I rule, where I have neither

clergy nor state, but the best sheep in the world, stay in France. If, as I hope, you are not molested, sell your works, buy a little house in the country near Paris, open your doors to a few of your admirers, and soon no one will talk about you."

I think that was not his idea at all; for he would not even have lived at Ermenonville, if death had not compassed him. At last, touched by the effect he had on me, and convinced of my enthusiasm for him, he showed me more regard and interest than was his custom, and departed, leaving behind him the rare empty feeling which one experiences on waking up from an exquisite dream.

My Letter to J.-J. Rousseau

I am, Sir, the person who came to see you yesterday. I shall not return, though I am longing to do so; but you dislike both devotees and their devotion.

Consider my proposals. No one reads in my country; you will be neither admired nor persecuted. You will have the key to my library and gardens; you will see me there or not, as you please. You will have a little country-house a quarter of a league from mine. You can plant, sow, do what you like.

Jean-Baptiste and his genius came to die in Flanders, but wrote verses there; let Jean-Jacques and his genius come and live there. Let it be at my house, or at his if you choose, that you continue *vitam impendere vero*. If you want still greater freedom, I have a tiny plot of detached land, where the air is good, the sky fair; and

it is only eighty leagues from here. I have neither archbishop nor chapel, but the finest sheep in the world.

There are flies in the ointment of the other house I offer you. If you like them, I will leave them; if you do not, I will remove them elsewhere. The state will treat you better than Geneva, which you have honoured so much and which you will so greatly enrich.

Like you, I hate thrones and rulers; you will reign over no one, but no one will reign over you. If you accept my offer, I will come to fetch you and will conduct you myself to the Temple of Virtue, which will be the name of your abode. But we shall not call it by that name; I will spare your modesty the triumphs you deserve.

If all this displeases you, consider that it has never been suggested. I shall not see you again, but I shall continue to write to you and to admire you, though I shall not tell you so.

During the time when I was sharing the favours of the most charming lady[1] in Vienna with the ruling Emperor, the noble, the admirable, the wise, the lovable, the gay, the honourable, even, shall I say, the good-looking Francis the First, the Empress sometimes went to the theatre and on those occasions the Emperor was unable to leave his box. One evening, when he thought that she was apparently engrossed in the play, he slipped away into the box

[1] Marie-Wilhelmine de Neipperg (1738–1775).

which I usually occupied at that time. His mistress and I were both a little upset by his appearance; but we knew that he was fond of us both. He asked me the name of the play; it was, as a matter of fact, *Crispin, rival de son Maître*.[1] I did not know how to tell him this. He pressed the point. Half-embarrassed, and half-bursting with laughter, I told him what the play was called, stammering out the words in a manner, which made the situation only too plain. And I escaped as soon as I could, leaving the charming and pretty lady to find some explanation which I knew her brain could easily invent to cover our embarrassment and my rude departure.

I have kept emperors and empresses waiting, but never a soldier. I much prefer to have to wait myself for my troops than to arrive late. One day when I was pursuing a lady for whom I had a passion and had dallied too long upon the palace steps, I kept the Empress Maria Theresa waiting for more than an hour with nothing to do. She was very angry, and made me come every day to report to the chamberlain in her waiting-room, and did not allow him to let me come in until she had proved to me that it was my duty to wait for her. I used to take paper and ink with me and write in her waiting-room every morning lest I should waste my time until the chamberlain would tell me to come back another day. At last, at the end of two weeks of public penance when I thought I

[1] *Crispin Emulates his Master*, by Lesage; April 25, 1753, was the probable date of the performance.

should be reprimanded, the Empress smiled graciously upon me and said: "Do you know that I have promoted you to the rank of colonel during our little quarrel? I must say I look after my interests badly. You lost me a company in the '57 campaign, and now you are going to lose me a regiment in this one. But take care to look after my wishes and my person."

M. Nény[1] told me one day the Empress complained that I never went to Mass; I implored him to make it clear to her that in view of the fact that my parents had always been so faithful to a cause which was less fortunate than their own, that we had been for two centuries excused from going. She was not in the least satisfied. So the next time that I approached her for some trifling favour, she complained of my ungodliness. I could not help telling her that the little religion I had was admirable, for no one could reproach me with being a hypocrite, and that I was a much better Christian than those who accused me of not being one. There was a blazing sun in my eyes which made them water. The Empress thought I was crying; I had not the heart to disillusion her. She said: "You are good at heart and I can still hope for your conversion. Stay a little in my room; I should not like you to be seen going out with such an unhappy look." This time I had difficulty in not crying at her tact; but all the same I laughed when I went out and made a good story of it. The Empress heard

[1] Patrice-François, Comte de Nény (1716–1784), a sort of confidential secretary to the Empress.

of it, but pardoned me as she also pardoned a thousand other pranks of the kind.

I have always done everything whole-heartedly. Obliged to take communion with the Empress Maria Theresa, I had not been able to find by ten o'clock at night a confessor who spoke French, for I did not want to declare my sins in my very uncouth German; somebody told me in the house where I was supping that there was a Father Aubri or Aubré and pointed out to me his room, to which I went at eleven o'clock. I woke up the whole house; I took the wrong staircase; I found myself in the room of a charming lady; she took me for a lover; she started to chase me; I opened one door and she slammed it on me; I found myself in a loft; I heard a tremendous noise going on; everybody came upstairs; they took me for a thief; I got away, or rather I denied all these assertions; at last I found myself on my father confessor's staircase and, quite resolved to go through it all to the end, I said to him: "Monsieur, you have been a Jesuit; you are surely indulgent. Do not get up; I will kneel to you at once." I started my prayer and then went on to confess. He took me for a practical joker, and horror-stricken at my irreligious insolence, or at the number of my minor sins, threw me out of his room.

When I was sent to Versailles to bring the news of victory at Maxen and the capture of 17,000 Prussians there, the King was always asking stupid questions; as, for instance, inquiring of the Vicar of St Germain whether there had been many deaths that winter in

his parish: "Oh, a very bad year," said he, repeating the phrase to everyone at the levee. He then asked our Ambassador, Stahrenberg, how long he had been at Vienna and whether there were a great many old men there, and how the Pope's pages dressed. I was much astonished to find that after I had made my addresses to all the members of the Royal family, I was taken away to see a kind of second Queen who was much more like the genuine article than the first one[1] and a very badly brought up old woman. Madame de Pompadour, for that was who it was, told me a lot of departmental and military fiddle-faddle. She outlined two or three plans and then said, rather pointedly: "You see, sir, what we are going to do for you; are you not satisfied?" "I swear to you, Madame," said I, "that I know nothing of your plans." She went on: "We are selling our plate to help pay for your war." And then she was sufficiently bad-mannered to say to me: "I don't like the ladies in your town of Prague." "Nor do I," said I, "I have been there many times." "They have no manners," she went on; "why were they not more attentive to Madame la Dauphine's sisters?" There was nothing to reply to this stupid remark, so I left.

The King gave me a magnificent ring, which I pawned the same day; for I was so very careless of everything at that time and wished to enjoy life to the full; the war was still going on and I was frightened that I should not enjoy myself sufficiently before I died. When I got back to Vienna, I sold to the

[1] Marie Leczinska (1703–1768).

Empress a tobacco box which the King had given me with his portrait on it set in diamonds. The diamonds I gave up to her with the box, but I kept the portrait. She saw the humour of the situation and I made it more clear by telling her (my mission had lasted a year) that I was determined to keep what was the sign of the last victory she had won. We had at that time just lost the Battle of Torgau (1760).

I was absolutely drunk with pleasures and parties, and games, and frivolities. Can you imagine what I experienced when I left this fairyland to go and pay a visit to my father at Baudour? I found him in an enormous room dimly lit, on a cold winter's day with an attack of gout, and two blackbirds for his dinner! He told me that some time before, when he was in Paris, he used to go to the balcony of the Opera, for that was the smartest place. "That is where I sat too," I said, "beside the Ambassador to Naples." "That is good," said he, "I know the place well."

While I was in Paris, being young, extravagant, fond of show, and with the grandest ideas possible, I had taken out a whole heap of letters of credit, not troubling about them but only wanting a large amount of money. These all arrived at the same time as I did at my father's house, which I left very soon to rejoin my regiment. Besides, I couldn't be bothered to stop with him. He was not very pleased to see me, and asked if I wasn't astonished at his generosity in having sent me fifty louis. "Of course," I said, "I

even had enough to pay for my journey here." It is true enough that I did not add on to that the three or four thousand louis I had expended in every kind of folly. I kept concealed as best as I could, my two couriers dressed in rose, trimmed with silver, my Hussars, and my negroes; but my father met at least one of them every day in the road.

The death of my father gave me great sorrow, despite the extraordinary change that it meant in my affairs. What had an even greater effect on me, and even reduced me to tears, occurred one day when he entrusted me with a little piece of business; this was almost the first time in his life he had spoken intimately to me. He was saying that "it was more my affair than his, *because* . . ." And it was this "because" that made me burst into tears.

When I was promoted to the rank of Colonel, I wrote and told him of it; he replied: "It is quite bad enough for me to have a son like you without the misfortune of having you as my Colonel!" I replied very respectfully: "My lord, neither of these things are my fault, and, for the second, your Highness must blame the Emperor." He ordered me to write to him just like the other Colonels. He never spoke a kind word to me, nor wrote to compliment me on the honour that I brought to his name and that of the regiment. He never took any interest in me when I had measles, and drove me from him on both occasions when I tried to see him in his house some little time before the coronation at Frankfort, after attending

which I went away to Russia and Italy till the year of his death.

Nevertheless, I forgot all his harshness in that moment when we only recall the good things we have seen or heard about people. I recollected his bravery during the wars, his noble manners at Court, and the fact that I should have loved him dearly if he had allowed me to. Maria Theresa herself used to be amused at my terror of him, and said to me one day, when I was laughing and joking with the ladies-in-waiting: "Look out! Here comes your father."

During one of my quarrels with the Court at Vienna I entered into negotiations about accepting a German regiment in France which carried with it a governorship, the "Cordon Bleu" and the rank of lieutenant-general. M. de Choiseul[1] said to me: "I grant you all that, but you will be a fool to accept this position. Take my advice and stay at home, for you are more bored with your Court than angry with it." He was quite right; I adjusted my views and everything was all right. That brings back to me another incident of the same kind. I was also unable to accept the proposal made to me by Prince Henry[2] through the late King of Prussia, if his uncle should die. I should have been lieutenant-general in that case also, governor of Stetten, etc. These proposals were both made in two courts where I was unknown.

[1] Etienne-François, Duc de Choiseul-Amboise (1716–1785).

[2] Frederick-Henry-Louis, prince of Prussia (1726–1802).

Everywhere it has been the fashion to treat me exceedingly well, and I have had a delightful time in a great many lands. I owe allegiance to six or seven countries—the Empire, Flanders, France, Austria, Poland, Russia, and perhaps Hungary—for they have been obliged to grant civil rights to all those who fought against the Turks, and I shall receive it at the first Assembly.

I once played the part of Corporal of the Guard at night. I invited everybody to dinner with the generals who never dined at home. Everybody was kept waiting: everybody thought the generals would come back. The only person there was Marshal Lacy, who expected to have a dozen persons to dinner and saw sixty arriving. He thought that his staff officers were to blame for having each had the misfortune to invite his friends on the same night; his staff officers were quite at a loss to know why the Marshal had invited so many. Everybody was uncomfortable, there was not enough to eat, the service was poor, and everybody had a fit of bad temper, so that the officers left the general's tent at four o'clock complaining that these were bad-mannered and rude people.

M. de Lacy, wanting to get news of the enemy, shouted to a Prussian Hussar without any expectation of succeeding: "I will give you ten ducats if you desert." The Hussar came at the gallop, cutting down the next man to him with a blow of his rifle, and arrived in our midst. He told us all he knew, and

Lacy paid him, though his news wasn't worth having. But think what happened afterwards. The general suggested that I should take him into my service. He was a thief and assaulted everyone he met; he was so dangerous that when I came back at night into camp I was forced to make him march in front of me, my hand on my pistol. Fortunately he deserted, and so I was relieved of all responsibility of him.

M. de Mérode, the captain of my regiment, at the moment when the battle of Hochkirch was beginning, thinking that I was without religion and wanting to reprove me, asked me if I believed in the existence of God, hoping thus to send me to the devil, but I outwitted him merely by saying: "I have never had any qualms about it."

To give you an idea how my poor brain was always running on and perpetually concerned with the affairs of the moment, for which I have always sacrificed everything, one day when I wanted to arrive early at a castle in the county of Glatz where a lady with whom I was in love lived, I promised my coachman to excuse him the rent of eight ducats he paid my father for his house when I came into the estate. He drove my horses into a lather at that, but I arrived just in time to have a few minutes' conversation, as I had hoped, before dinner; I kept my promise. In the conduct of this affair I had to force open the drawing-room door and then go off to a masked ball several miles away: To return to my quarters post

haste, cloaked and dominoed like a Venetian to escape notice—a disguise which had the very opposite effect: To spend whole evenings masqueraded as a woman, waiting to get into her convent: To receive letters, to endure fits of jealousy on her part, despair on mine: To make an appointment to fight a duel with a so-called rival, a little Prince of the name of J——.

One day, when I had come wrapped up in an English cloak to endeavour to enter the convent, all the rascals of the neighbourhood pursued me, hooting at my disguise. But what was more amusing was the day I waited on my rival; he came after two hours with three or four of his friends, made me every kind of excuse, apology, and compliment, and invited me to a charming supper-party which I should never have had but for that incident.

Another time I was going to the garden of Count Montecucculli, which now belongs to Prince Razumowski. I passed very quickly by a shrine without noticing that the little Saint had attracted a procession which just then came pouring out from a narrow street. An angry zealot seized hold of my leaders and shook them in a way which might have brought them down; another flung himself on the coachman; another, still more fanatic, began to beat him. I shouted in German: "Go to the Devil" (words which got into the indictment and nearly lost me the case). My coachman slashed him with the whip, the four horses were stopped; the angry zealots even got hold of the wheels in order, perhaps, to attack me with blows as well. I got out and as, by mis-

fortune, I had not my walking-stick with me, I scattered the procession sword in hand. The priest remained alone at his little altar and I went on my way.

Two days afterwards the Devil descended upon me —clergy, citizens, police, lawyers—with a sheaf of documents. Marshal Neipperg[1] came to see me. "What have you done?" he said. "That sort of thing was all right in the past; even Charles the Sixth, the Grim, laughed when he heard that Prince Eugène, Prince Commercy, and Prince de Vaudemont were in the police court for a disturbance in the street. But a religious procession! And the Empress . . . You are ruined. Go and find M. de Schrattenbach."[2]

"I shall do nothing of the kind," I said. "If I meet him, perhaps I shall talk to him! I am much obliged to you, Marshal. Your habitual kindness as well as your forethought at this moment must establish for you my affection and esteem."

The case went on. I was much more afraid of a lecture from the Empress than of a fine. One day the huge figure of the chief of police entered my box at the theatre. I went in after him and told him of the insult paid to my suite and my person, the injuries done my horses and my coachman, and all they tried to do to me. His Excellency said that they had just cause, and that they could have easily killed my man, and should perhaps have done so. I grew angry;

[1] Wilhelm Reinhard, Count Neipperg (1684–1774).

[2] Francis Ferdinand, Count Schrattenbach (1707–1785), Chief of Police.

his Excellency asked me for more details. I gave them him; he said he did not know if they were correct or not. I lost my temper completely, and told him with all the effrontery and rashness of youth, "Believe at once what I say!" indicating by my gestures that I would throw him into the stalls. His Excellency pretended to believe me and the affair died down.

One day, when there was no change of horses at the inn, I became bored and went to a one-eyed sort of cabaret that was a common meeting-place for Prussian recruiting sergeants, taking with me two colonels, Schorlemer and Clerfayt, whom I was escorting to Joseph II's peace camp. I saw myself observed by one or two raw hands. I had only my height of five feet ten to recommend me, for the bloom of youth had gone from me. They wanted to enlist me for fifty ducats, and I accepted on condition that they took the other two. They agreed in the case of Schorlemer who was very handsome, but refused Clerfayt because he was too ugly, which was quite true. I burst out laughing; they were not amused, and prepared to take me off. Fortunately I had given my name at the hotel, and that got me out of the difficulty.

Another story: At Liége, I pretended at the inn to be a cardinal sent by the Pope to reprove the Prince Bishop for his irregular habits of life. He was ready to die of fright and terrified lest it might get into the papers, so wrote to Prince Charles against me. The

Prince was a bad person to have chosen; for he laughed inordinately and told me all about it later.

Angry at not having been allowed to have the regiment and the Fleece when my father died, I wrote to M. Nény, saying that the Empress was in the habit of treating my services purely as a joke. I said that I was born in a country where there are no slaves and that I could easily take my talents and my fortune elsewhere. She read the letter and, furious at this last remark, summoned her son, Marshal Lacy, and Prince Wenceslas Lichtenstein, my uncle, to hold a council of war on my account. The Emperor who was then sterner than he has ever been since—for he was systematically stern—proposed to banish me, instead of being stern, saying: "We shall only have ourselves to blame if we don't take him at his word. We must take the initiative and send him back." My uncle, willing to play the Roman relative at my expense, proposed to imprison me in a fortress to make me learn to eat out of Royalty's hand. "And you, Marshal?" said the Empress. "I shall be more severe," said he, "than the Emperor and the Prince; their two punishments are not strong enough for the crime. De Ligne must come to court; when he kisses your Majesty's hand, turn your head away and do not speak to him the three months he stays in Vienna."

This she carried out with such spirit that I sometimes saw her almost laughing at herself.

I had been bored with myself (and I had bored others) for a long time. I wanted to go and be bored

with myself by myself. I possess a lovely forest, and there I went one day, or rather one evening, to shoot a rabbit. It was the hour of feeding. Hundreds of rabbits passed me, vanished, scratched their noses, leaped hither and thither, whisked about, but always so quickly that I was unable to fire off my gun. One old buck, a little grizzled, with a rather more sedate air than the rest, appeared beside his burrow. After having completed his toilette quite at his leisure (for from that comes the saying "tidy as a rabbit"), seeing that I was aiming at him, he said: "Go on, fire. What are you waiting for?" I can tell you I was staggered. I had only fired in battle on animals who talked. "I shall do nothing of the sort," I said, "or I shall die; you are a wizard." "Not at all," he replied, "I am one of La Fontaine's old rabbits." At once I fell from my high estate. I knelt at his tiny feet and begged his pardon a thousand times, and reproved him for exposing himself to such danger. "From whence comes this boredom with life?" Said I: "Because of the surrounding world." "But is not your thyme and grass always there?" "Yes; but not the same people. If you knew the people I have to spend my life with. They are not the animals they were in my youth, but horrid little scented rabbits chasing flowers. They want to eat roses, instead of a nice cabbage leaf, which was good enough for us. Rabbits nowadays are geometrists, politicians, philosophers, and I don't know what—and some can only talk German, and others a French which is no longer intelligible. If I come out of my hole to visit

another gentleman nearby, I no longer meet anyone I understand. Animals are too clever nowadays. And, let me tell you, by reason of it, they are so witless that our old donkey here knows more than all these Jackanapes to-day." I implored my rabbit not to be put out, and promised to take care of him and any of his friends who were still alive. He promised to tell me what he had said to La Fontaine and to take me to see his old friends. This he did, and I found his frog, who was not quite dead, though he had said so, and was most charmingly modest compared with the animals of our time. His toads and grasshoppers sang better than our nightingales; his wolves were more worthy than our sheep. "Good-bye, my little rabbit, I will go back to my woods, my fields and my orchard. I will set up a statue to La Fontaine and pass my life with the animals of this good man."

Let me give you some idea of the character of the Empress of Russia. There is in her a mixture of nobility and good sense, of inspiration and vigour. These are the four pillars which hold up the colossal realm she rules over. She is not quick at grasping things; so you must never make too subtle a remark, for she only misunderstands it. It must be simple like herself and as she would speak. Her Majesty is susceptible; once her dignity as an Empress has been ruffled, whether about the war or finance or even the climate, she is no longer at her ease; and far from taking her revenge, even if the slight is a real one, she merely lessens her intimacy, which it is very difficult

to regain. She has such extraordinary kindness that after she has laboured for hours at what would appear to be a treaty of alliance or a partition of Europe or of Asia, it will turn out, for instance, to be some business of one of her friends whom she wishes not to run into debt again. You may say of her as well, that she has tastes for everything, without actually having taste.

To prove my words to you in a more substantial way than by rumour, I will tell you the following story about Monsieur de Ségur, which amused me very much, though I used to be very fond of him. After a victory in Russia there is a general singing of the *Te Deum :* then it is the custom for one of the Cabinet to read aloud the despatch and the names of the killed, the wounded, and those who have distinguished themselves. The successful and extraordinary capture of Kinburn (which obliged me to leave the following day for the army) immediately brought forth the *Te Deum.* The Empress came back through the drawing-room, where everyone kissed her hand, and said to Monsieur de Ségur: " I am sorry to have kept you waiting so long." " Madam," he replied, in his most flattering manner and in admirable taste: " I have made up my mind, though with difficulty, that what will be unbearable is having these ceremonies every day." At this piece of courtly flattery, which implied that he expected victories unceasingly, the Empress said to me: " Have you observed the mood of the Comte de Ségur ? These Frenchmen can never get accustomed to my success."

Of all the times that I have been able to appreciate her great wisdom, there is one which I recall best at the moment. It was when I was charged with making a plan with her for co-ordinating the movements of our armies with hers. "Write to the Emperor," said she, "that it is precisely by deeds of this kind that alliances are shattered. It is impossible to fix with any certitude, above all at such a distance, the exact nature of our movements. One will always be complaining of the other. We have both the same end in view. What is to the interest of the one is to the interest of the other. I am sure of the Emperor's friendship, he is sure of mine; there is my plan, complete."

She made it her principle, whether because she disliked being engaged in conversation or because she wanted to avoid being bored (which is what she hated most), never to allow anyone to talk affairs of State to her. Everything had to be done through her Ministers, who were the channels to her ocean of wisdom; for she kept her Cabinet in her head. She was never greater than in adversity. She would have given her last diamond, the last inch of land in her vast dominions, and her life, rather than commit an act, not merely of downright villainy, but which smacked of the least dishonesty. In every way, she was an example in whom could be observed the difference between true nobility and pretentiousness.

It was Court etiquette to be the Empress's lover. I have known them nearly all. The first was a Soltikoff, the second the King of Poland (Joseph Poniatowski), the third Orloff, the fourth Baziliskoff,

the fifth Potemkin, the sixth Sabatowski, the seventh Soritsch, the eighth Korsakoff, the ninth Lanskoff, the tenth Germanoff, the eleventh Manonoff, and the twelfth Souboff. They all were aides-de-camp and gave themselves no airs in her presence, and very few or none in the presence of others. There was never the slightest awkwardness or suspicion of favour shown in public. Two-thirds of Catherine and a third of Paul I would have made the greatest, the best and the happiest sovereign in the world; that is to say, before Paul went completely mad.

Portrait of Joseph II

If to be called great it is enough that a man is incapable of meanness, then to that fame one may nominate Joseph II; but I feel that more than that is necessary to merit the title. A sovereign's reign must be glorious, brilliant, happy; there must be dazzling feats of arms performed by him in battle, unexpected undertakings, magnificent successes, and perhaps, in addition, entertainments, fêtes and lavish splendour. I do not know how to flatter him any more now that he is dead than I did when he was alive. Circumstances refused him the brilliant opportunities by which he could have become famous. He could not be a great man, but he was a great prince and the foremost in the front rank of his age. He never gave way to love or friendship, possibly because he thought his inclinations would get the better of him; often he mixed too much calculation with his affections; he

never confided in anyone, because he saw other sovereigns deceived by their mistresses, their confessors, their ministers and their friends. He never indulged himself, because he wished before all else to be just to others; he was severe despite his intention, in the belief that he was judging to a hair's breadth. One might find one's way to his heart without deserving it, but one could be sure of never losing his esteem. He was frightened of being partial in his distribution of favours; so he bestowed them without the addition of amiability, and refused them in the same manner. He exacted more nobility from the nobles than from others and, when they lacked it, despised them more than any other class; but it is false to say that he was purposely unfair to them. He wished to be completely autocratic, in order that others might not have the power to do wrong. He forewent all the pleasures of life, that he might set a good example to the workers; and what he hated most of all was dilettantism. He always brightened for a moment when someone replied to him or told a piquant story; he would then rub his hands; but immediately return to his rôle of listener, speaker, or arguer, as though nothing had happened. He was a miser as regards State money and generous with his own; generous is not quite the right word, but prodigal. He knew how to play the king and hold the court together when it failed him completely; he conducted it with the pomp and majesty of Maria Theresa's times, though it looked like a prison or a convent all the year round. His educa-

tion had been, like that of most sovereigns, neglected in favour of a course of polishing; a system by which everything was learnt except knowledge. Joseph II, in youth, gave no promise of charm; he gained that quality suddenly, when he was crowned at Frankfort. His travels, campaigns and the company of several distinguished women formed his character. He loved being confided in, and he was discreet, though he had a finger in every pie. His manners were charming and he was never pedantic; I have seen him write on one of those large cards, which he invariably kept in his pocket, lessons in morality, kindness and obedience for a young lady, who wished to leave her exasperating mother; and again, some lessons in music for another, who was not satisfied with those of the master she attended. In society he saw at once if anyone was displeased with him for some order, some enterprise or some punishment. He took pains in company to make himself pleasant and redoubled his charm in conversation and in his compliments to ladies; he would draw up a chair for them, open a door or close a window; in short, by his activity he accomplished all those little deeds which are necessary in company. By his politeness he guarded himself against familiarity. He understood every shade of feeling; he had none of that affability of which so many kings make a point and which they use to show their superiority, and what he had he hid under several guises; he told stories very prettily and was plentifully supplied with natural wit.

He did not know the arts of drinking, of eating,

of amusing himself, nor did he read anything except State papers. He was too much the governor and too little the king. Every day he played music to himself. He got up at seven, and while he dressed he sometimes laughed and made his major-domo, his physician and his devoted servants laugh with him; and all without any undue familiarity. He walked from eight to twelve through his chanceries, where he wrote, dictated and corrected everything himself; at night he went to the play.

As he went from his rooms to his study he would meet twenty or thirty or even a hundred shabbily dressed men and women of the people; he took their petitions, talked with them, comforted them, and gave them replies in writing or by some other means at the same hour the next day; and when he found their complaints unjust, he kept silent. He only wrote badly when he tried too hard to write well; his sentences were long and diffuse; he spoke four languages perfectly and two others passably. His memory, well trained in youth, grew better still as the years advanced; for he never forgot a word, a circumstance, or a face: he would walk up and down his room with someone to whom he was giving audience, talking almost volubly to him and with a gay air, would hug him by the neck and then, feeling ashamed, would relapse into seriousness. He often stopped to put a log on the fire or to take up the tongs or go to the window for a moment. He never let a word escape him, and mocked people who slandered him. He alarmed the Pope, the Sultan, the Empire, Hungary,

Prussia and the Netherlands. The fear of being unjust and of causing misery by upholding with the mailed fist any project of his prevented his carrying them out; they were almost always the result of some impulse.

It is to Joseph II's high blood pressure that one may attribute the disturbances of his reign; he never finished or polished any of his works, and his only fault was that he merely sketched everything, whether good or bad. The following letter will let you judge his character better than anything I could tell you.

A Letter of Joseph II, written on the Day of his Death

VIENNA, *February 19th*, 1790.

MY DEAR MARSHAL LACY,

The only thing in this world which could prevent me writing these few lines with my own shaking fingers compels me to make use of another's hand. I see rapidly approaching that which must separate us. I should be very ungrateful if I left this world without repeating to you once more, my dear friend, those expressions of gratitude, which are your due on so many scores, and which I have had the pleasure of making known in the eyes of the whole world. Yes, indeed, if I have become worthy of admiration, I owe it to you, for you have made me, you have illumined my path, you have shown me men as they are and in addition the whole army owes to you its formation, its glory and its duty.

Your sound advice under every circumstance, your personal devotion to me, which has never swerved on any occasion, great or small, are things, my dear Marshal, for which I can never thank you sufficiently. I have seen the tears fall down your cheeks on my behalf: tears of a great and wise man are a grand apology. I must say good-bye. I embrace you tenderly. My one regret on leaving this world is that little circle of friends of whom without doubt you are the foremost. Remember me, your most sincere and affectionate friend,

JOSEPH.

I am possibly the unknowing cause of the massacres at Lyons for having got Collot d'Herbois hissed—a bad comedian who oppressed a good one called Chevalier, a protégé of mine. The world knows that this wretch gave as an excuse for those crimes, that it was in revenge for insults he had received in that unhappy town. Amongst other disasters, of which I may have been the innocent cause, I must place the disaffection of Poland owing to the bad reception of Ignace Potocki at Kiew by the Empress of Russia. It was a promise I had made the King. After that occasion Potocki cast himself and his country at the head of the King of Prussia. From that followed on the Constitution of the 3rd of May and all its consequences.

I have seen at the height of their brilliance the countries and courts where pleasure has reigned paramount; for instance, the court of the last sovereign

of Saxony, the King of Poland, or to be more accurate, the Comte de Bruehl;[1] I have witnessed the last glories of this satrap who, to travel a hundred yards on horseback, had to be accompanied by a hundred paladins, stavosts, governors, cordons-bleus and a mob of princes connected with the House of Saxony. I have seen Louis XV aping the air of majesty of Louis XIV, and Madame de Pompadour that of Madame de Montespan.

I have seen three weeks of magic fêtes at Chantilly, of performances and parties at Villers-Côterets, where all the most delightful people in the world gathered together. I have seen the enchanted voyages of Isle-Adam; I have seen the delights of the Petit-Trianon, the walks on the Terrace, the music in the Orangery, the splendour of Fontainebleau, the hunts of St Hubert and of Choisy. And I have seen all fade and vanish utterly.

I have seen the last of the great days of the House of Lorraine, which never fell from its high estate but still existed in the time of King Stanislas, who had inherited the charm, the good-temper, and the pleasures of the old régime of dukes in that land.

I have seen the last splendours of Europe in that icy climate, where Catherine the Great combined the luxury of Asia with that of Louis XIV, the Greeks, the Romans and the Arabian Nights.

I have seen Potsdam, Sans-Souci, and their glory; at once a military reign, an august court, and a staff-headquarters.

[1] Count Heinrich de Bruehl (1709–1763).

I have seen shattered, together with Prince Charles of Lorraine, the Netherlands and a charming court, gay, poised, delightful, mannerly; a court that dined, drank and hunted. And to prove to you that I have seen everything vanish, I have seen all the courts of the Empire down to the smallest disappear owing to lack of respect, even that of the last Prince de la Tour, which, although ridiculous, was none the less magnificent; Mannheim, Munich, Erlangen at the time of the last Margrave of Bayreuth, and Stuttgart, which were the scene of fêtes, pleasures and great public splendour—all these I have seen perish. I have seen the little court of Bonn vanish, and even, which is the end, that of Liége, brilliant under two Bavarian princes.

Further, I have seen nothing replace in Europe all the great houses of the nobles, who had given up their pages, guards, and gentlemen-in-waiting, but still preserved their grandeur in lackeys, horses, receptions, in keeping open house and giving entertainments every now and again.

I have given myself the trouble of counting up my journeys in the diary of my secretary Leygeb. I find I have travelled thirty-four times from Brussels to Vienna, always via Paris; twelve times from the field to Vienna during three wars, and in addition, eighteen times from Belœil to Paris; that is up to the year 1786, since when the Turkish War and the revolutions have compelled me to live at Vienna for the last thirteen years.

I have travelled twice through Russia, twice through

Poland, once through Moldavia, the Crimea, and Provence. I wager that I have spent three years of my life in a carriage, and more than 150,000 florins in post-horses; and as much on gambling, I think. My campaigns have cost me more than 500,000 florins, and I have given, in addition, more than 200,000 to my regiment and other troops under my command. I have spent possibly 500,000 florins in building and gardening, which is not excessive, and as much in fêtes, reviews, training-camps, entries into cities and installations, etc. My ordinary household expenses in the Netherlands were 60,000 florins, in addition to a further 30,000 or 40,000 for my travelling household. I estimate that I have spent altogether six or seven million Viennese florins or twenty million French livres during my lifetime.

How happy I should have been if glory had treated me as well as love! But, alas! she is so difficult to entrap! I have enjoyed her several times in a small way; but a full and complete possession, never.

Twice I have been chosen and have been within an ace of being ordered to Italy to command the army. . . . There I should have separated my columns in order to make two attacks at once; I should never have left my supports or my reserves. A campaign of spies, patrols, pickets, light troops, detailed maps, intrigues with the peasants, labours to know every route, surprise attacks, harassing, cutting off small bands of the enemy to show one's

ascendancy, would have been my plan; for the spirit in which one conducts a war makes all the difference.

Instead of that, I live quietly and happily and enjoy the present without regretting anything, which I have just said I might have done, and which would have probably not succeeded as I imagine. I am alone on my hill and write in a pretty little belvedere which I call my little Belœil and which consoles me for losing the real one from the loss of which no one else would ever have recovered.

Bonaparte is Cæsar, Alexander, Pyrrhus, and Scipio in one; he is a colossal figure. But you cannot say anything good about his feelings or his distinction. When I see him liking pomp and being rather autocratic, he reminds me of Paul I. Why does he have wife and family? They do not suit him. If he only spent a hundred thousand francs a year and gave no other display than the magnificence I approve of, and listened to and replied to people, he would be the greatest man the world has ever seen.

The Emperor of Germany (Francis II) allows himself to be made Emperor of Austria by the Emperor of the French. He is like an officer, retiring on a pension.

Alexander the First is becoming a bourgeois; the King of Prussia a corporal; there are only good fathers and good husbands to be seen on the thrones nowadays and not good Kings.

The Queen of Naples is full of intellect, of distinction, of generosity, which appear in everything she

does. She is the only child of Maria Theresa, who is like her. But unhappily she is more lively, reflects less and, often out of kindness, does not take sufficient time to explain herself or to make those pleasant or appreciative remarks, which she ought. She embarrasses by excess of confidence; because such confidences, betrayed by indiscretion, compromise and lay open to suspicion persons who do not deserve it. For that reason people remember this phrase, which I thought was never said to anyone but myself, and which depicts her unhappy situation very clearly: "I am no longer wife, mother, queen, nor archduchess; I am nothing."

What a queen, again, is she of Prussia! What beauty! What charm! With her regular features she recalls the unhappy Queen of France. And what charming sisters! I visited their court at Anspach.

It is only four years ago that flattery and intrigue came to live permanently in Vienna. Foolish cantatas of praise, applause, newspaper articles, portraits, etc., were not then known. This court prided itself on being unlike any other. Everyone worshipped Maria Theresa and loved Joseph II without telling them so. The first compelled enthusiasm; the second esteem. Only no one thanked them for it; they knew it and were not annoyed.

Imagination in this town is such a heterogeneous plant that several of my friends who possess it are mad. There is too much detraction here, though all in good

part. No old woman's scandals or tittle-tattle; the dowagers and even the religious ladies here are not spiteful. The detraction I speak of is for things, works and deeds which elsewhere would be admired, but here a man is not warmed by the fires of enthusiasm. . . .

What is to be said of the honour of a country where the eldest son of a great house does not have to enter the army? He must hoard up his days to produce children as stupid as himself, of which the eldest is destined to be an idler also, who will be afraid of gunfire.

All these reflections are part of that term of my life which has been the least interesting, the least significant, the least important, but the most pleasant. I must tell you that my house decorated in rose, the colour of my thoughts, is the only open house in Vienna. I have six places laid for dinner, five for supper. Anyone may come in, anyone who cares may sit down. Sometimes when as many as sixty friends of the house arrive at the same moment, my straw chairs are not enough. Then they stand in an ever-flowing crowd, as in the pit, till those most crushed are driven out. . . .

I do not go to court or to routs; I refuse grand dinner parties. I live a happy life. I am very fond of looking my best in the streets of Vienna, riding behind the Emperor's carriage, on grand occasions when I replace the Chamberlain. I take great pains

with the set of my lace ruffles and my orders, which Roger Damas has called so charmingly "Honour's favours."

Soon there will be neither nations nor sexes. Society becomes more and more monotonous. If we were not occasionally able to converse with some old fool who has drawn us apart into a window-seat to talk, or if we could not meet the *laudatores temporis acti* who have forgotten the time when they were bored with each other and very properly regret that time we would die of boredom. I repeat, society and every country grow more like each other every day; everywhere are seen and said the same things. Good and bad have vanished. Every man writes his morning letters perfectly, and every woman too! As for myself, I prefer the days when women did not know how to spell.

I am going to tell you why your generation is so wise. It is because you see us too much at a disadvantage—in the morning on horseback, in our open carriage with a bad complexion caused by rain, wind or dust, and at night badly made up and dressed in order to follow the fashions. Of old, wearing coats embroidered at every seam, our hair dressed like a bird of paradise, ten buckles on each shoulder, powdered with orange-flower, pommaded with jasmine, finger-nails rouged, looking like grandees, we showed ourselves as men of pleasure. We appeared by candlelight, after having shone first in the theatre,

where the green rooms were full of benches crowded with people wanting to see us. We then went into the drawing-rooms to fix fast the attentions we had already drawn on ourselves. The women, for their part, seldom saw the daylight. . . . Now that we are uglier and your virtues less attacked, you gain a reputation you do not deserve.

My poor brain is exhausted, my heart never. The best years of my life were those when I loved Her.[1] My happiness when I acted with her at Baudour among pleasant company; her beautiful nature and person, as white as herself, I did not fully appreciate till I tore myself from them. I recall once again, with more tenderness than of old, that I deserted a delightful party she gave for me to go to one at Fontainebleau, which was not given in my honour, and that I left at night to avoid her tears; such grace, beauty, and fervour were hers that nothing I ever found at court could replace them.

Angélique loved me in the true sense; one cannot love more. Unhappily two other women, the only ones beside her who have really loved me, chose exactly the same moment. I loved all of them at the same time with the utmost sincerity. But it cost me much in embarrassment and upbraidings. She who affected me the least perhaps suffered the most, but I suffered much from her who affected me most. I did not deceive them; perhaps it was myself I deceived.

[1] Angélique d'Hannateire.

In my pretty house at Kattenberg I have a wall on which is painted the number and initial of the lady I love and who loves me. I always think that she is the last I shall ever be in love with. This time at all events! There is a J; and another letter. On the the wall is also a clock, and many times when I have been happy I change the hour. I shall change it no more. I grow old; this will be the end, indeed, of my fine career, which is adorned by this latest passion. Also, my wall is in confusion. All the other letters are rubbed out and the dial marks half-past five, which is the hour when I go to visit the divine creature to whom I am attached for life. I will write no more.

Life is a round; it finishes as it begins; the two childhoods prove it. Only the time that separates them is different. My autumn, which my health and will prolongs till it encroaches on my winter, is like my spring; in truth it is, by circumstances I had not foreseen, as was the revolution. Conveyancers and moneylenders flock to my anteroom, as in the days when I was reduced by my niggardly allowance; the loans I obtain on some trifling pretext, and which satisfy my real needs, are like those I got at twenty years of age from the faro banks, when I only lost half they lent me.

Here, then, am I a poor gentleman reduced to the habits of my youth! I have known some who became great princes, with me it is the opposite. You have seen, too, how my father, to make me careful

of my powder and perhaps to teach me to shoot well, made me buy my ammunition, but gave me seven kreutzer for every head of small game shot on ground controlled by his gamekeepers. Well, to show you once more what life's round is, by betting a florin more for every piece which I threw down than the Prince de Biron, I have paid for all my presents to the beautiful Madame W——ka, who would entrap me completely, if she has not done so already; and also occasionally for gifts to La Toscana, our leading singer, charming enough but very seductive, at whose house I pay my homage like a young man of eighteen, pretending to myself that I am the King of Etruria!

Another proof that life is a round: I have a donkey, a sheep, and a goat, who come to breakfast with me when I am at Kattenberg. They scramble up to my bedside, and I am only too lucky when they only put two feet on it to ask for bread. When I clap my hands, they gallop off after me to the woods. When I was twelve, I had a crow, a sheep and a fox, who consoled me for the harshness of my tutors when they were displeased with me. The crow used to peck the legs of my dancing-master, as though she knew I hated him the most. The fox was a thief, who stole the thread from my tutor's writing-table and mixed it all up with his papers and one day ate the face of a portrait of one of my ancestors, which was stacked on the drawing-room floor with others waiting for my father to arrange them. He was furious at the loss of what he believed to be a drawing of my great-grandfather.

The whim took me suddenly, in 1803, to make a general confession. Having forgotten my prayers, I fell on my knees; I wished to say my *confiteor*, but I could not recall it. I began and forgot half of what I wanted to say. My good old fellow of a priest knew very little French and, possibly because he was delighted to see so great a sinner kneeling to him, quickly gave me absolution and even forgot to impose a penance.

I leave several pages, as you will see, because I expect to live till 1820. Somebody prophesied I should live as long as I had a black hair on my head. I have looked carefully; there seem to be very few gray hairs. We shall see.

The congress of Vienna has come to the end of its entertainments; what shall I show them to amuse them? The funeral of a field-marshal.

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